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A defense of Jesus Christ

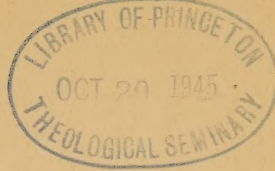












A  
DEFENSE  
OF  
JESUS CHRIST.  
BY  
✓ MENARD SAINT-MARTIN.

*Translated from the French*

BY PAUL COBDEN.



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## PREFACE.

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THESE sermons were preached many years ago at Nimes, in France, to an audience composed wholly of men. So powerful was their effect, impressed on the mind as they were by the Divine Spirit, that many unbelievers were led to exclaim, with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Their author was called in the flower of his age to meet the Savior, God, whose claims he had so nobly vindicated before men.

But though he "is passed into the heavens," all may yet hear his voice, saying that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."



# CONTENTS.

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## I.

	PAGE.
THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY WITH REGARD TO JESUS CHRIST, . . . . .	7

## II.

THE TESTIMONY THAT CHRIST HIMSELF HAS GIVEN IN HIS WORDS, . . . . .	52
--	----

## III.

THE TESTIMONY THAT CHRIST HAS GIVEN OF HIMSELF IN HIS LIFE AMONG MEN, . . . . .	83
--	----

## IV.

THE TESTIMONY THAT CHRIST HAS GIVEN OF HIMSELF IN HIS INNER, SPIRITUAL LIFE, . . . . .	116
---	-----

## V.

THE TESTIMONY THAT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH HAS GIVEN OF CHRIST, . . . . .	152
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# DEFENSE OF JESUS CHRIST.

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## I.

### THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY WITH REGARD TO JESUS CHRIST.

LUKE II, 28-32: "*Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*"

JESUS CHRIST is the eternal object of faith. Christianity is a personal, living, enduring revelation, and its doctrines are all incarnated in facts. It is this that distinguishes the religion of heaven from the religions of earth, and the teachings of men from

the teachings of God. To be a Christian is to believe in this wonderful Christianity, and, by faith, to receive its blessed author, Jesus Christ. And why should we not receive him? He alone, of all men, has dared to say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." "Abide in me, and I in you." "Without me ye can do nothing." Now, have we received him? Are we Christians? Is our age a Christian age? Is its prominent characteristic faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do we really believe in him? That we have a certain veneration for him; that our institutions, and laws, and manners are under the beneficent influence of the Gospel; that we respect its teachings; that there may be in the midst of us sincere Christians, real disciples, in communion with the Master, we are far from calling in question. To doubt or dispute the fact of genuine discipleship would be doing a great wrong to the age in which we live, and, in a certain sense, would be accusing Christ and his ministry of want of power. But that society is fully



Christian, that the Gospel is believed and accepted by all those who are classed under the different denominations of the day, and that the religious convictions and purposes of the people are deep and living, we can not—we say it with a feeling of profound grief—we can not affirm. The great battle between infidelity and Christianity infidelity has not yet entirely lost, and the prevalent weakness of the moral sense that all serious men admit and deplore proves the feebleness of conviction and the persistency of religious indifference. Even those who wish to be considered as possessing an interest in religion do not seem to be in earnest about winning eternal life. They extol religion as a preservative against social evils, but do not appear to believe that faith can do more for men than to secure earthly blessings, and help them resign themselves to their fate at death.

And in these last times there are those who are seeking to justify their principles by the principles of Jesus Christ, rather than to

reform and remodel them according to the teachings of the Master. They use religion to spread error, instead of submitting themselves to it. It is with them a means, not an end. Wise men are continually employed in the work of saving society, but very few in that much greater work, the salvation of the soul. And yet social regeneration can come only from individual regeneration. The salvation of society must originate in the salvation of the individual. It can never be saved by dangerous theories and errors, but only by the purification and salvation of the individuals who compose society.

It is certainly right for men to labor to reorganize society, and establish it upon a true and solid foundation, reducing it to principles of order, and harmonizing its various elements. But, after all, society, as it is in this world, can not endure forever. It is destined to mortality. And, even if the human race should be perpetuated indefinitely, *we* shall remain here but a few years. We are

soon to be born into another world, and death is the condition of this birth. So we must die. And yet we shall not die; for, unlike society, that has, in itself, the principle of mortality, the individual has, in himself, the indissoluble principle, the immortal spirit, the deathless soul.

And now, well may we ask, What is to become of our souls? Alas! how seldom do we put this question to ourselves! and that we are so slow to do it is proof that we have in our hearts some deep, serious evil.

It is too true of us that we are materialists—materialists not so much in theory as in practice. A few years ago an orator said, "*What society wants is enjoyment.*" That one sentence perfectly describes our situation. Yes, the world does not wish to live forever in communion with God. It desires earthly, immediate enjoyment. O, what moral degradation is this! And how shall society rise out of such degradation? By the regeneration of the individuals who make up society, and

this regeneration can be accomplished only by faith in Jesus Christ. This faith alone can elevate us above material and perishable interests. It alone can give us spiritual life, and unite us to God for time and eternity.

Let us observe here that this social progress to which many devote themselves in these latter days will flow naturally from our union with God ; for, as St. Paul says, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

And yet this social progress is only of secondary importance, for, to us all, the most important result of our union with God is our everlasting salvation. This union with God is, therefore, the essential thing.

What would be gained if we should succeed in working great social changes among men, if we neglected to offer eternal felicity to these beings of a divine race, whose bodies, it is true, must decay and perish, but whose souls are immortal? As ministers of Christ, we always appear before you with the same

message: "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." While the ministers of false religions, or of a distorted Christianity, spend their strength in useless efforts to induce men to accept their authority—while they preach themselves—our mission is to tell you that "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Leaving, then, all secondary questions, we propose to establish in these sermons the authority of Jesus Christ. Let others, if they will, try to hide from humanity the only Savior, we must invite all men to believe on him, and love and serve him, believing, as we do, that there is but "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

To defend Christ and prove the validity of his claims is, it seems to us, the surest way of combating infidelity and superstition at the same time, and overthrowing all error, in whatever Church it may exist. In thus defending Christ, we also assign to Reason the true part she is to act. We show that it is not for

Reason to invent truth, but to examine truth. We likewise combat rationalism—that rationalism which, in every nation and every age, puts the spirit of the world in the place of the true God and the true Savior, and which seems to examine every thing only that it may reject whatever is good.

To prove the claims of Christ to be just is to continue the work of the glorious Reformation. The Reformation, in fact, was not merely a strong protest against error; it was, also, and particularly, a solemn affirmation of the truth. It established the claims of Jesus Christ and his truth. When it shook the throne of him who, “as God, sat in the temple of God, showing himself that he was God,” its object was to strengthen the throne of Christ, and prove him to be the king of heaven and earth, and the light of the soul.

For five Sabbaths, my brethren, I wish to call your attention to those proofs that establish the authority of Jesus Christ, and I feel constrained to implore the all-powerful aid of



the Holy Spirit, for with the feeling of my own personal insufficiency is united a sense of the difficulty of my subject. But, feeble an advocate as I may be, I shall not hesitate to plead the cause of Christ before you, assured, as I am, of the aid of my Divine Master, and of the united prayers of all those who desire the triumph of truth and the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The plan I propose to follow in these sermons is traced for me by the very nature of the subject. The historical order is also the logical order. Not only by the testimony of the prophets, but also by the testimony that the presentiments of the heathen world furnish, we shall prove that a mediator between God and man was necessary, and that he was promised and expected. And by the testimony that Jesus Christ has given of himself we shall show that his teachings and his public and private life were sure proofs of his celestial mission. Finally, by the testimony of the history of the Church we shall show that the

greatness of the results prove the cause to be all divine.

To-day I shall confine myself to the general expectation in which humanity lived with regard to a mediator between it and divinity. It is of Jesus Christ as the "desire of all nations" that I wish to speak to you. And may my words help to fill your hearts with the joy that Simeon felt when, looking at the Son of Mary, he exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

In the beginning of Genesis, the most ancient of books, and to which I refer as a historical document, appears a fact—a fact told, evidently, in figurative language, but this language expresses two great truths which, born in the very cradle of humanity, have lived on through ages, recognized as indisputable truths. These truths are man's forfeiture of the favor of God, and the necessity of a restoration. They are contained in this promise:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This proves not only an existing evil, but that the evil shall be destroyed. Humanity suffers, but also lives in hope. In God’s own good time the deliverer shall come. A sad truth and a precious promise of deliverance are plainly revealed in this verse to which we have referred. If you question the most ancient monuments of history, if you examine the annals of all nations, and consult their philosophers, and oracles, and poets, you will find bitter regret for the past, and hope for the future. You will every-where hear voices proclaiming the misery of man, and his expectation of a deliverer. The expectation of a deliverer! It is to this, my brethren, that I wish to call your attention to-day. The misery of man in his fallen, ruined condition is fully expressed in the fact that he was looking with longing eyes for a deliverer. Hope implies suffering; desire proves privation.

Leaving, for a moment, this ancient nation that has been called "the people of God," I wish to speak first of those other nations, some of whose monuments of thought have been bequeathed to us by civilization. Among them there is one of which we have known but little, so great has been their hatred of strangers, and so complete their isolation from other nations. I refer to the Chinese. Even the little we know of their sacred books permits us to assert that this people had always hoped and waited for a Savior, who was to destroy all evil by suffering himself. Confucius, five hundred and fifty-one years before Christ, declared that a holy being, possessing all knowledge and power, was to be sent from heaven to earth.

This idea of a Savior we find, in different forms, in all the fables of the East, and, although it is enveloped in strange figures, it is not so unnatural or so hidden that we can deny the proof it gives us of the fact of their expectation of deliverance. That I may not

weary you, or burden your memory with names, I will mention only the Vishnu of the Hindoos, the Mithra of the Persians, the Orus of the Egyptians, and Thor, of the Scandinavian nations, which all personify the mysterious hope of a deliverer who should be a God, and yet a man, and destroy all evil, and raise up and restore fallen humanity.

But I hasten to leave this slippery ground for the solid foundations of history. I pass over those ages of which so little may be known, and whose events are lost in the dim distance, and turn at once to the most eminent poets and most illustrious historians of the heathen world, and ask what testimony they have to give with regard to the expectation of a mediator between God and man, a restorer of the human race.

The expectation of a great king, who was to found a universal monarchy, and destroy all the evils that afflict humanity, and restore man to his primitive innocence and happiness, has been immortalized in Virgil's celebrated

Eclogue. To flatter an illustrious personage, Virgil supposes that his son, a child who was never even to see the light, should realize this great hope, and satisfy the aspirations of man to a higher and better state. This enthusiastic Roman poet said that a new race was to descend from the height of heaven; that the Iron Age was to close and the Golden Age begin through all the universe; that the entire world would soon breathe the air of perfect freedom, and the chains of terror with which mankind had long been bound be broken. All these wonders were to be wrought, he said, by a Being of divine origin, a Being distinguished from all other celestial beings, and he was to govern the world by the virtues of his Father. "The time approaches," he says; "prepare yourself for supreme honors, noble scion of the gods. The whole universe is glad, and rejoices in prospect of what is to come." Is there not, in this poem, the echoes of the voices of the prophets?

Long before the time of Virgil, Æschylus, a



tragic Greek poet, expressed this same presentiment, this same mysterious expectation of the coming of an all-powerful deliverer. Prometheus is suffering humanity personified. The poet describes humanity in its different phases, and considers it under the striking image of a poor, unhappy man, tied to a rock, a vulture preying, by day, upon his liver, and still having enough left to feed upon, as the liver grew as fast as it was eaten. A messenger from the gods is at last sent to him, to tell him that his sufferings shall never have an end till a god comes and offers to take his place and give him his own life for him.

But let us examine the less suspicious testimony of philosophers. Let us listen to Socrates, who took for his device these beautiful words: "Know thyself." He says: "Unless it shall please God to send us some one to teach us, we shall never succeed in our design to reform men." And he adds: "We must wait till some one comes to instruct us, that we may know how to conduct ourselves before

gods and men. Let us invoke the savior God, so that, by an extraordinary and wonderful teaching, we may learn the truth, and thus be saved.

Finally, if, after interrogating ancient traditions, and ancient myths, and poets, and philosophers, we interrogate history, also—history, which neither invents nor reasons, but simply registers the facts of the past for the instruction of the future—we learn from Tacitus that the idea prevailed generally in his time that the conquest of the world was to be the work of men born in Judea. Suetonius confirms, in nearly the same language, this remarkable statement.

This fact of the universal expectation of a Savior the infidel has met every-where in his study of the ancient nations, as we have, and, while he has not disputed it, he has treated it with contempt. Others, on the contrary, thinking to add to its force and grandeur, have gratuitously supposed that this hope had its origin in the contact of the heathen nations

with the only people then in possession of the truth; but neither are, I think, right. This hope of a coming Savior must have been transmitted from age to age, and been born of the longings and sighings of humanity after deliverance. Whatever may have been the providential means employed by the common Father of us all for the preservation of this belief, his children should render thanks to him that he did not leave them in their fallen state without heavenly aspirations, or fail to testify of himself among men.

I come now to speak of the Jewish nation, to which I shall give a special place in this examination of the hope of the human race with regard to a deliverer. It has, indeed, its own distinctly marked physiognomy, its own peculiar character. If it be distinguished from other nations as a race, and as a social phenomenon, it is no less distinguished in a moral and religious point of view. It is a unique type that has existed for four thousand years, and will exist, we may presume to say, for a

long time to come. It is a peculiar nation. Its origin, destiny, religion, manners, usages, all contribute to make it a very difficult problem to solve.

And what strikes us first is, the origin of the nation. It has received its life from men whose genealogy has never been lost like that of many other nations. It is historically known to us. We see in it no myths or fabulous incarnations, as in Eastern traditions, and no pretended apotheosis, as in those of the West. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are historical personages. They were born, and they lived, and died, as we are born, and as we live, and die. In reading Genesis, we are impressed with the fact that the human family must have been constituted in the way described, and that in the history given us we have indeed the history of the origin of humanity. The descendants of the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, multiply in the strange land, and become intermingled with their oppressors, without being confounded with them. They

remain a nation within a nation. And while learned Egypt dreamed of fabulous kings, and imaginary dynasties, and gave itself an imaginary existence of hundreds of centuries; while it vibrated continually between a nebulous pantheism and a ridiculous polytheism, Israel—the pastoral people—preserved the thread of the history of humanity and the knowledge of the true God. After breaking, through Moses, the heavy yoke of servitude, they carried away these two treasures, and defended them with heroic courage and indefatigable perseverance. Living in a little corner of the globe, they defied, for thirteen hundred years, the attacks of the most powerful empires. Free or enslaved, governed by judges or kings, weakened by irremediable schism, exiled to the borders of the Euphrates, or gathered around their own altars, in their own sanctuaries, the Jews retained their individuality as a nation, and preserved their language, and traditions, and religious books, and distinctive character, and, more than all, their

*hopes.* Nineveh, Babylon, Memphis, Antioch, and Rome launched their innumerable armies in vain against this little nation. It stood up in its strength. This is certainly a unique, wonderful fact in its history, and well worthy of our attention. Remarkable in their relations with other nations, the Jews are still more so in their own private history as a nation. Of all the nations of antiquity, the Jewish nation alone adored Jehovah, the true God ; it alone was the depository of the truth contained in the first lines of the oldest of its sacred books : "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." One God, creator and controller of all things ; a just, good God, extending his loving care over all his creatures—such was the God of the Hebrews, and such is our God. The most spiritual philosophy has never told us any thing higher or greater. Higher or greater, did I say ? Ah, nothing so high, nothing so great as the Hebrews told us of the wonderful *I Am*, three thousand years ago. They worshiped



the true God. While the whole world was prostrated before idols, the Israelites held them in abomination. They were illuminated by a ray of Divine truth, and while the gods of Memphis, and Babylon, and Rome multiplied every day, they worshiped one God, the eternal, invisible, every-where present, just, unchangeable, holy God. And there was the same superiority in their system of morals. Their great code, the ten commandments, is to-day read in all our Christian temples.

The fate of this singular people is well known. Their children are scattered over the face of the earth, living representatives of the ancient world. They have no country, and no princes, and yet they are more wonderful as a dispersed nation than they ever were as a powerful, united nation. The story of their unbelief we read with tearful eyes, and are constrained by it to believe in the man Christ Jesus, whom they rejected. You are familiar with this sad story. One day, near Jerusalem, they crucified a man—a man who had been

condemned by Caiaphas and Pilate, by the religious and the civil power, by princes, and priests, and people. All had consented to his death. All had mocked him, and compelled him to submit to the greatest outrages, and, in a transport of wild rage, had exclaimed, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"

A few years afterward, while the guilty generation was still in existence, this blasphemous wish was met, and the involuntary prophecy received a striking accomplishment. That nation, of whom it was said, "It flies like the eagle," came to punish their crime with unprecedented severity. The Roman legions revenged the Holy and the Just One who had been disowned, and outraged, and delivered up to the infamous punishment of the cross. Since then the children of Abraham, dispersed to the four winds of heaven, and shaken by all the nations of the earth, have roamed through the world, the imperishable wrecks of their destroyed nationality. But an obscure death can never be the lot of

this people. There is no sepulcher for "the people of God." They still live, the wonder of all nations, a standing miracle, leaving infidelity without excuse, and proving, beyond all dispute, the mercy of that God who, while he punishes, is never weary of showing his tender mercies, and inspiring his creatures with hope.

This strange nation has had a special mission. Taught by the Divine Spirit, it has lifted the vail that hides the future from the view of mortals. It has not only felt, with all of the race, that longing for deliverance that presaged the coming of a deliverer, but has prophesied his coming, and foretold his nature, and work, and life, and his whole history, in all its essential points.

I shall not stop here to refute the objections of infidels with regard to the prophecies. I prefer to begin immediately the impartial examination of the Jewish idea of the promised Messiah.

What strikes one at first in this idea is its uninterrupted existence through ages, and its

growing brightness and strength. Like the little streams that are so narrow at their source a child may leap over them, but which are enlarged in their course by tributary streams till they become rivers, and finally mingle with the ocean, so did this idea grow from age to age.

We have spoken of the first link in that long chain of revelations, the object of which was to awaken in the minds of men mysterious but blessed expectations, and open humbled, repentant hearts to the hope of restoration: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This promise was vague and confused, but it foretold the coming of a Being belonging to the human race, man as well as God, whose mission would be to reinstate man in felicity, paying the price of restoration with his own sufferings and death. He was to bruise the head of the serpent—in other words, destroy the consequences of sin.

He was to be bruised in the heel—that is, he was to suffer in the accomplishment of this work of redemption. Such was the origin of the Jewish idea of the Messiah, an idea that forty centuries were to develop, and make more and more definite. In the heathen world this idea was so wrapped up in strange, odd figures as scarcely to be recognized, but it was the principal idea with the elect people, the prophetic people. It was the principal subject of their meditations and hopes, and they considered it as belonging particularly to them, and as something that was to be realized in their own nation.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was chosen from the Chaldeans. He showed his faith, proved his obedience, and God said to him: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Jacob gathered his children around his dying bed, to give them all his blessing. And it seems to us that he would naturally have designated, as the stock from which the elect tribe was to spring, as

the one in whom the promise was to be realized, either the oldest of his children ; or Benjamin, the son of his old age ; or Joseph, over whom he had shed so many tears. But as a *prophet*—not as a *father*—he extends his trembling hands, and placing them upon Judah's head, uttered this remarkable language : “ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh come : and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

But this was only the dawn of day. This dim, prophetic light was to grow brighter and brighter. It was but little to show the human race from whom the “ Desire of all Nations ” was to spring. It was necessary to describe his nature, and specify his work, and the object of his coming. And this was the mission of David, and Isaiah, and Micah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel. Revealers of the thoughts of God, they have, with a strong, firm hand, raised the vail that hides the future from men. We have their writings, imperishable monu-

ments of Divine wisdom, which we must consult if we would know what was revealed to them with regard to the Savior of the world. The place and time of his birth—his nature, at once Divine and human—his perfect holiness—his life, his sufferings, his death, his triumph, and the destiny of the words that dropped from his lips while he was on earth, are all found described with a precision that we may call historical. Every reader of the Gospels, every child who has learned his catechism, or who knows the Apostles' creed, can affirm, in reading these astonishing predictions, that they have been accomplished in Jesus Christ. I am satisfied with quoting the remarkable language; and may you all, as well as myself, appreciate the wonderful harmony of the prophecies!

And let us first notice the place of Christ's birth: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings

forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The time of his birth is as clearly designated: "And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O, Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not



for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war, desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Time will not permit me to enter into an explanation of all the details of this prediction. Confining myself to the principal points, let me remind you that after seven times sixty-two weeks of years, that is to say, four hundred and ninety years before the edict of Artaxerxes, Jesus, setting the seal to the prophecy, and causing the oblation and the sacrifice to cease, expired on the cross, and that, a few years later, Jerusalem and the sanctuary were a smoking heap of ruins.

Isaiah and Malachi agree in their announcement of the coming of a prophet, who was to be the precursor of the Messiah, and to prepare the way of the Lord :

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned : for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : the grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall

stand forever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain : O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God ! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him : behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

"Behold I shall send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

And it is prophesied of this Angel of the covenant, of this desired Savior, that he shall be holy : "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots : and the Spirit of the

Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord : and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord : and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears : and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

This Saint above all saints, this extraordinary Being who alone, of all men, would say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" was to be of a divine race, was to be God, and yet the man Christ Jesus: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

He was to come as a spiritual deliverer, to

enlighten, and redeem, and comfort sinners. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

He was to be exposed to contradiction, and the salvation of the world was to come from his deep humiliation and bitter sorrows. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; and he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;

the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Betrayed by a friend, sold for a slave's price—for thirty pieces of silver—he was to expire in terrible torments, taunted and jeered at by passers-by. Hear him as he wails out. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a

potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones. They look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord; O, my strength, haste thee to help me."

Of this slighted, rejected Savior it was prophesied that he should not be held in the bands of death, but that his apparent defeat should be the beginning of his triumph. God would not permit his beloved to see corruption. "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to

bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

"Sing," exclaims the prophet to the heathen world, "O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee."

And, speaking of the Messiah in his glory, he says: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation



that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee."

I could multiply these quotations, for they are innumerable. It is not difficult to find them, and, in giving you the prophetic history of Jesus Christ, I have been, in a certain sense, embarrassed by the fullness and richness of the predictions with respect to the Messiah, and have been obliged to cast aside much that was exceedingly valuable. I have intentionally omitted the prophecies touching the flight into Egypt, the name of Nazarene that Jesus was to bear, his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, the treachery of Judas, the strange use that he made of the reward of his iniquity, his tragic death, and many other details with regard to the humiliation of the Messiah, and his glorious and universal reign. What I have said seems to me sufficient to refute the preconceived opinions of those who see in the prophecies nothing but wild dreams

and strange hallucinations, the realization of which can be only the result of chance. If it be true that, for nearly four thousand years, these predictions accumulated, and that they were full, minute, general predictions, describing, in all their essential points, the character and life of a person yet unborn, and tracing the outlines of a work of such gigantic proportions, that eighteen hundred years have not destroyed or weakened it, but, on the contrary, have increased its greatness and strength; if it be true that these predictions have been fulfilled to the very letter, so that we may say with truth that the old covenant was a preparation for the new covenant, the Old Testament the preface of the New Testament, and Judaism the pedestal of Christianity, then it must be that these men we call prophets, and He whom they contemplated by faith, were the objects of the special favor of Divinity.

To award to chance the honor of having, for long ages, worked to prepare a whole

nation for what was to come—to attribute to accident the realization of all the wonderful promises made to man, is to contradict the simplest data of reason, and act entirely contrary to common-sense. To invalidate this decisive proof, we must believe that these prophecies were made posterior to history, or that the events that occurred were wrought out by those who had an interest in fulfilling prophecy. But these two gratuitous suppositions, the last resort of infidelity, are equally inadmissible. There are two irresistible proofs of the fallacy of the first supposition, and the events of the life of Jesus entirely overthrow the second.

We Christians are not the only people who possess the Old Testament: it is also in the hands of those to whom it was especially confided; and although the prophecies with respect to the Messiah fetter and embarrass them, and are a perpetual accusation, not only of them, but of their fathers, they preserve most religiously this precious deposit that

condemns them. When the Jews were driven from their country by the foreign wars, and the civil discords that preceded the birth of Christ by several years, and when they were forced to flee at the taking of Jerusalem, they carried with them their sacred books, and they still possess them. Their Bible is the same as ours, and certainly they have never permitted it to be altered for the sake of the detestable Nazarenes. Do we not know that the synagogue has constantly watched, and still watches, their holy books with jealous care and maternal solicitude? When and how could the fraud have been possible?

To this testimony of the authenticity of the Old Testament we may add the testimony of the heathen world. During the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, two hundred and fifty years before Christ, the books of Moses and those of the prophets—in other words, the whole of the Old Testament—was translated into the language of Demosthenes and Pericles. The Greek and Roman world preserved this

celebrated version. We still possess it, and even if the Jews had lost their mandate of the notaries of the Most High, and of the archivists of the Christian Church, the Septuagint alone would be sufficient to establish the fact that the prophecies of the Messiah were anterior to the coming of Christ. All doubt on this subject is impossible. More than two centuries before the coming of Christ the Old Testament was written out. All the books that compose it were collected. Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and Micah were, beyond all dispute, the inspired authors of the astonishing predictions we have quoted.

The supposition that these events were so arranged by Jesus Christ and his contemporaries as to accord with the prophecies is equally inadmissible. We can not conceive of such a coincidence when the circumstances were so multiplied and the facts so important. To do it we must admit that there was a general conspiracy—a conspiracy not only of Jesus and his apostles, but of the Jews and the

heathen, of enemies and friends, and those that were neither enemies nor friends. Certainly, in ordering the general numbering of the subjects of the empire, Augustus was far from imagining that he was fulfilling the prophecy of Micah. Neither did Judas, who betrayed Christ, nor Caiaphas and Pilate, who condemned him, nor the men of blood, who ironically called him "the King of the Jews," dream of fulfilling prophecy. The cruel murderers of Christ fastened him to his cross, they pierced his feet and hands with nails, they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, they parted his garments and cast lots upon his vesture, they put him to death, and all this they did with no thought or wish to accomplish prophecy. In the mind of God alone was the thought of prophecy. In his great mind was the plan to bring good out of evil, and make all things work together for the accomplishment of his merciful designs. It was God who sent Christ down to earth. Yes, Christ came from the bosom of the Father to

show the mysterious love of God, and to die for the redemption of the human race. It was God who raised him from the dead, and punished rebellious Israel, and introduced the Gentiles into the Church, thus giving to Jesus "a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

And now can you not understand the joy of Simeon, who, after waiting long for the consolation of Israel, at last held in his arms the child Jesus, to whose cradle the entire world had so often turned its eyes? Can you not comprehend the joy of the old man as he gazed at the Messiah promised by the prophets, at the Savior for whom he had sighed and longed, and exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation?"

O let us acknowledge that all these inspired

men, these revealers of divine truth, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and all the prophets, have as high a claim to our admiration and confidence as they had to Simeon's. Let us see in them the instruments of the wisdom and love of the Most High, the mediums of his manifestations, and the organs of his counsels.

While the East looked toward the West and the West toward the East to see the Savior come, these representative saints of Israel were preparing the way for his coming, and slowly and progressively accomplishing the work summed up in these simple words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." But what are the prophets in comparison with Him whom they announced? What is the promise in view of the realization? What would be the chords of the lyre without the inspiring thought of the artist who makes them vibrate? And the inspiring thought of the prophets was Christ. It was Christ who, rising far above them, gave them their impulse, their inspiration, their life.



The life of Christ among men was not an accident. No, it was no accident. As we look far into the past, we see that Christ was indeed "in the beginning with God, and was God."

To thee, then, O Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world, we offer all homage and adoration. Thou art worthy of a glory as much greater than that of Moses, "as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house." We have gathered the fruits of thy sacrifice. We have seen the fulfillment of the wicked prediction of Caiaphas: "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people." Thou hast redeemed and comforted us, and we have no longer to ask thee, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" We have only to exclaim with thy disciples, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

## II.

THE TESTIMONY THAT CHRIST HIMSELF  
HAS GIVEN US IN HIS WORDS.

JOHN VI, 68, 69: "*Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

WE have seen that the life of Jesus Christ was not an accident in the history of the world. Christ was desired and promised long before he came. The longings and aspirations of humanity and the predictions of the prophets were Christ's witnesses.

But did he really answer the expectations of the world? Was he really the revealer of divine truth so much needed? Had he power to take away sin, to quiet anguished consciences, and give peace to the heart? These are grave questions we are now about to ask,

and to answer them let us first turn to Jesus himself, and we shall see whether his teachings, and life, and work in the world justify his affirmations.

This method of proceeding may at first surprise you. It is, however, natural, and we shall follow it to the close of the discussion of our subject. When a chemist wishes to understand the nature of a body, he decomposes it into its various elements, and when he has studied them, or, as we might say, questioned them by this analysis, he decides upon the substance, and its properties and laws. To become acquainted with one who approaches us, and whom we have never before seen, we converse with him. We learn his name, if we have not known it, and his character and occupation, and also his object in making himself known to us. We consider conversation as an almost infallible means of becoming acquainted with a stranger. All the testimonials and certificates he can show us are not, as a general thing, worth as much

as an hour's conversation with him ; for when men talk face to face, they can read each other's thoughts as they can in no other way. For the same reason, all judgment by default is revised by law when the accused appears as a prisoner.

Jerusalem was moved by John the Baptist, the prophet of the wilderness. His powerful preaching attracted crowds, and held them captive in the solitudes of Judea. No doubt the most contradictory opinions with regard to him were in circulation. His adversaries probably called him a fanatic, or an insane man, while his partisans must have said : it is Elias, or it is the Messiah. The supreme tribunal of the Jews showed good sense and intelligence in sending messengers to him to ask, "Who art thou?" John the Baptist took the same course with regard to Christ. Shut up in prison alone, a captive, and deceived in his expectations, he passed through one of those hours of weakness of faith from which no one is ever entirely exempted. And then,

to relieve himself of that terrible uncertainty, he thought he would turn directly to Jesus ; so he sent his disciples to Jesus, with this question : " Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? "

You see, my brethren, that the course we propose to take is justified by experience, and even by the very nature of things.

Besides, these questions, which I am about to propose, in a certain sense, to Jesus Christ, are necessary to prevent a misunderstanding between myself and my hearers. It is, indeed, to the true Christ I wish to lead you, and not to those false Christs that have existed in the imaginations of so many men. The Christ we preach is not simply a reformer, or moralist, or sage, whose portrait deserves a place among the great men of antiquity. The Christ we preach is the Christ of the Bible. Let us, then, open the Bible, and ask Jesus to speak to us of himself. We shall observe at once that his answers are clear and concise, and, unless we listen with a prejudiced or dishonest

mind, we shall make no mistake with regard to their true sense and high meaning.

And, firstly, let us notice that the long prophecy we read last Sabbath evening Jesus applied to himself. He constantly declared himself to be "the Christ," "the Lord's Anointed," the "Messiah."

One day, in the beginning of his ministry, he entered the synagogue of the place where he had spent his childhood and youth, sharing the humble employment of Joseph, the carpenter, and living in the deepest obscurity. He rose to read. The book of the prophet Isaiah was offered him, and he took it and read, in a loud voice, these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

As he read all eyes were fastened on him,

for such promises always made the hearts of the Israelites beat. Bent under the heavy yoke of the Romans, as they were, they sighed for deliverance; but, when the simple, unostentatious man rose, they doubtless said to themselves, "What can that plebeian say? that man who, only yesterday, was a common artisan, and has but just risen from obscurity, what can he say? Is he going to talk to us about the sorrows he has so long shared with us? or is he about to give the signal for our independence, and announce to us that Jehovah has remembered his oppressed people, and is soon to raise up among us another Moses or Cyrus?"

Jesus, having closed the book, said to them calmly, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

There was no longer any doubt as to what Jesus intended to say. It was of himself he was speaking. He had not spoken of the promise as something to be accomplished, either in a near or far-off future. "This day,"

said he, "is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

A few moments later a furious crowd were leading a man to the brink of one of the high rocks of Nazareth. It was the same crowd that had filled the synagogue; the man was Jesus. The people had understood him. He had called himself the Messiah.

But let us analyze the Jewish idea of the Messiah, and examine its three elements. The Messiah foretold by Israel and desired by all nations was to undertake the salvation of the world. He was not to govern one nation alone, but all nations. He was to be the mediator between God and man, was to descend from Adam, but to be, also, the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us. In other words, his will, and power, and nature were all to be divine. And as the Jews looked upon Jesus of Nazareth, standing in their synagogue and declaring himself to be God, they no doubt exclaimed among themselves: "Can it be possible that he pretends to all this?" This



question we, too, may ask, not in the spirit of the Jews, but in the spirit of humble, honest inquiry.

To answer it, I pass over, in imagination, time and place, and with Saul, on the road to Damascus, I ask, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the answer he first gives is, "The Son of man." This we can understand, for we see that he suffers as we suffer, and mingles his tears with ours. We see that he is hungry and thirsty, that he is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and that, in the bitterness of his soul, he raises his supplicating voice to heaven. He trembles in view of the cup he must drink. He feels on his forehead the cold hand of the King of Terrors; his eyes close; from his lips is breathed the last sigh; he is taken from the cross, wrapped in a winding-sheet, and laid in the sepulcher. He is the slave of death. We see that he has had a cradle and a tomb, that he is our friend, and brother, and companion in adversity, for he tells us that he is the "Son of man." But we ask him to tell us his origin,

and he answers, "Before Abraham was, I am." "I am!" But is not that the name of God himself? When God revealed himself to Moses, did he not call himself, "I am?"

Again we turn to Jesus, and ask him what was his errand to this sad world, and he answers, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." To seek and to save that which was lost! To deliver me, his ungrateful, rebellious child, from condemnation! To save me from everlasting death! But is not that the work of a God? And has not Jehovah himself said, "I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Savior?"

Once more we question Jesus, and ask him to tell us the extent of his power, and he replies, "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth."

But we say to ourselves: Who but the invisible Architect, the wonderful Being who created all things out of nothing by the word of his mouth, can call himself the King of

the universe? Trembling with the fear that we shall confound the creature with the Creator, we once more turn to Jesus, and ask him to tell us his nature. We say to him, with Philip, "Show me the Father, and it sufficeth me;" and he answers: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

These are wonderful words, but they were spoken eighteen centuries ago, and, if we would appreciate their true meaning, we must try to understand the impression they made upon those who heard them from the lips of the Savior. It may be that some of us regard these strong declarations as figures, and think that the apostles, in their veneration for their Master, exaggerated his words. And we may ask: Did Jesus really regard himself as the Son of God, in the strictest sense of those words? He was descended from Adam: he was the son of Mary: he had "not where to lay his head." He was a poor man, and did

he really believe that the empire had been placed upon his shoulders, and that he was the "Mighty God, the everlasting Father," "Immanuel, God with us?"

To decide this question, and dissipate our doubts, we will turn to the enemies of the Savior, not to that ignorant crowd who, when Jesus declared that he had "power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again," exclaimed, "He hath a devil, and is mad!" not to that crowd who, when Jesus said, "I and my Father are one," took up stones to stone him; but we will select the intelligent men of his age, the chief priests, the doctors of the law, the princes of the people, and we will decide again upon the criminal action that was brought against Jesus Christ by the Sanhedrim.

The public voice had accused him. He "was a man, and yet had made himself equal with God." This was the accusation as he stood before the bar of the religious representatives of Israel. He was to answer for

his words and actions before an illustrious tribunal, composed of the *elite* of the nation. The accusations were vague, the testimony contradictory, but Jesus was silent among his accusers. Caiaphas rose, and appealed to the sincerity of the accused, and to the veneration he ought to feel for God: "I adjure thee," he said, "by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" It was a solemn question, for the life of the accused hung on the answer. And what answer did Jesus give? "Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy." And turning to the judges, he asked, "What think ye?" Priests and people, Pharisees and Sadducees, all answer, "He is guilty of death." The sentence was soon ratified by the civil power, and not long afterward Jesus expired on the cross.

And now, my hearers, I appeal to your common-sense. Jesus declared himself to be the Son of the Father, and laid down his life to support the solemn declaration. But would he have done this if he had been nothing more than a human being like us? O, if the apostles, if the Church, if I who speak to you, and you who listen, have wandered so far from the truth as to render homage and adoration to the creature instead of to the Creator ; if, in a word, we have become idolaters, the fault is with Jesus Christ alone. If he be not God, he has not brought light, but darkness, and has not come from God, but from the devil. If he were not God, the disciples acted most wrongly and foolishly in confessing his name, and dying to attest their faith in him. If he were not God, then the truly wise, those whose discernment and firmness we ought to praise, were Herod, who derided Jesus as a fool, and Caiaphas who condemned him as a criminal. Decide, my hearers, decide between Jesus and the Sanhedrim, between

Jesus and his murderers. If Jesus be not the "Word made flesh," the Savior of the world, the King of heaven and earth, it is presumption, and folly, and sin to worship him. He must be a blasphemer and a madman, or the Son of God.

I might pause here and speak of that cry of every heart, of that protest of every conscience, against the condemnation of Jesus that has placed the man of Nazareth on a pedestal, from which no one can ever take him down, and fastened to the pillory of public opinion, Herod, Caiaphas, and Pilate, thus condemning the judgment of the Sanhedrim, and, at the same time, confounding the scoffers and the envious, the judges and the murderers. But I do not wish to go in advance of my subject. I prefer rather to ask you to examine with me the teachings of Jesus, and his life, that we may see whether they support his claims or not.

A philosopher, who, if we may judge from his opinions, has undertaken to prove that

although a man may be so unfortunate as to lose his faith, he always preserves a little of that light that shone into his heart in childhood, has said: "The morality of the Gospel is always unquestionable and reliable, and consistent with itself. Reason teaches us that we ought to obey its precepts, but it also teaches us that it is above reason." This testimony of Rousseau, the philosopher of Geneva, is valuable, but very incomplete. All the attempts that have been made to separate the moral teachings of Christ from his doctrinal teachings have been vain, and without any result. As a simple idea can never be decomposed, so these two teachings are indissolubly united, and form but one. It is as impossible to separate them as to separate the stream from its source, or the rays of the sun from the sun itself. The limited testimony of Rousseau ought to be generalized, and applied to the whole Gospel. What is true of the precepts is true of the promises. What is affirmed of the morality of the Gospel, we



affirm equally of its doctrines. Let us, then, examine the teachings of the Savior, as a whole.

What first attracts the attention in these teachings is that they are universal, and this is true of them in a twofold sense. They are addressed to all men, and to every part of every man's nature. Their depth and their simplicity are so great that they are suitable food both for the learned and the ignorant. They are the daily bread that is found alike on the table of the rich man and the poor man. While an orator who is to address an audience composed of various classes of men is troubled to know how he shall adapt himself to all minds, and rarely succeeds in satisfying them, Jesus, whose audience was formed not only of the men of his age, but of future ages, used language that was so clear, and of such general adaptation, that all men have understood it. The Bible is as much in place in the workingman's home as in the home of Paschal, the scholar. But who could say as

much of the dialogues of Plato, or of the thoughts of any great moralist? The unlettered man or the child feels no interest in them, and throws them aside at the first glance; but who is indifferent to the touching parables of Jesus—to the parable of the prodigal son, for example? What depth of thought, and yet what simplicity of expression!

I have learned, by experience, the certain effect of this parable. When, as a minister of Jesus Christ, I have been called to appear before those nameless women whom society covers with shame and contempt, I have always selected this parable to read to them, and it has never failed to move their hearts and open the fountain of their tears. The impression may have been fleeting, the tears may have soon been dried, but they were none the less a tribute to the divinity of Christ's teachings, and a tribute made greater by the fact that it came from the degraded. This is, indeed, strange. It is an inexplicable moral phenomenon for those who deny and despise

the divinity of Christ. No man has ever spoken like this man, for he knew how to adapt himself to all men.

And the teachings of the Savior are not only adapted to all men, but to every man's entire nature. They enlighten the mind, and move the heart, and convince the conscience. There is in the Word of God a mingled tenderness and authority that place it above all human language, and prove it to be divine. We listen to the voice, and feel it to be the voice of God, but we do not shrink back, for it draws us to heaven. As we hear it we are not tempted to say, with the Israelites gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die;" but, with the disciples, we say instinctively, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The examples I have given fully justify the highest appreciation of the teachings of Jesus. Christ's words were, indeed, the words of God, and it is difficult to know what to select from

language so varied and rich—every word of our Savior is the expression of such deep, pure thought, such ineffable tenderness and perfect holiness. The depth and breadth of his thoughts and the simplicity of his language alike claim our admiration. The more we read the New Testament the more we see the majesty of Christ's teachings as a whole, and the perfect finish of their details, and we are puzzled to know which to present to men in the small compass of a few sermons. His concise, energetic words, that resemble lightning, and those gentle, tender words that were like morning dew, all rush upon us, and which to place before you we know not, for all are equally perfect.

The sublimity of Christ's words attracts our attention, wherever we turn, in the New Testament. It is given to a few fine geniuses in the world to be sublime two or three times in their lives ; but Jesus was always sublime, and if habit had not blunted our moral sensibilities we would see this sublimity in all his teachings,

and in every word he uttered. We resemble those who, having grown up in one of the countries where nature is prodigal of her charms, receive no impression from them. They have seen them so long that they have at last become almost blind to them. How perfect is our resemblance to them! O Lord, open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law!

The sublimity of Christ's teachings is not more apparent than his perfect assurance of their truth. He never hesitated or demurred, and he rarely refuted objections, but affirmed the highest moral and religious truths with the assurance with which we state a mathematical axiom. The secret of this wonderful assurance is hidden in these words: "I am the truth." So satisfied was he of the truth of all his words that, in contradicting preconceived opinions and imposing silence on the passions of men, his strongest affirmations were accompanied with only a simple motive, and his most difficult commands with merely

a promise. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." This sure knowledge that he possessed the truth Jesus expressed when he referred to the destructive effect of time upon all created things. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Whether directly opposing the prejudices of his own age and of all ages, or imposing silence on the rebellious reason and heart, Jesus displayed the same authority as when he rebuked the angry waves, and said, "Be still."

And what presence of mind he always manifested! How well he knew how to manage those who wished to entangle him in his talk, or make him contradict himself, or force from him some declaration that would be contrary to his inflexible justice or compassionate love! The Pharisees were more displeased with the holiness that condemned them than they were

jealous of the rights of outraged morality ; but they dragged an offending woman into the presence of Jesus, intending to reduce him to the necessity of being an inexorable judge, or an accomplice in the crime. "Master," said they, "this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned ; but what sayest thou ?" What did Jesus say ? Did he order that terrible punishment, of which the people themselves were the executioners ? or, crushing under his feet the holy law of marriage, did he open the kingdom of heaven to impurity ? No. He did neither. He "stooped down, and, with his finger, wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not ;" and finally "lifted up himself," and, looking his accusers in the face, said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." "And they who heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one." Jesus was left alone in the temple with the woman. She stood there,

humbled and trembling, expecting from the Holy One the sentence that the sinners had not dared to pronounce upon her.

"Hath no man condemned thee?" asked Jesus. "No man, Lord," she answered. "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more," was our Savior's reply. Thus, without leaving a stain upon the purity of morality or the Jewish law, he had been faithful to his divine mission, for he had awakened the consciences of men, and pardoned the woman. Truly, the Son of man had come to "seek and to save that which was lost."

But insincere, dishonest adversaries seldom consider themselves conquered. They reappear after a defeat. The enemies of the Savior were like the waves of the Sea of Tiberias, one moment hushed, the next lashed into fury. Among the Jews, there were two political parties that were hostile to each other, because they were governed by opposite principles. They were the Pharisees and the Herodians. The Pharisees longed for



National independence, for they detested the heavy Roman yoke ; but the partisans of Herod, forgetting that they were the people of God, had accepted the shame of foreign domination, and kissed the hand that oppressed them. United, however, by their common hatred of the Savior, they went together to ask him, in the presence of the people, the insidious question with regard to the tribute money.

“Master,” they craftily said, “we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man : for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell, us, therefore, What thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not ?” Jesus saw at once that it was a well-laid snare, and that if he kept silent and attempted no reply to the exciting question, it would injure his reputation for wisdom. He saw also that, if he answered in the affirmative, he would become an object of suspicion, and lose his reputation as an Israelite, and be ranged

among those unpatriotic men who are the first to open the gates to invaders. He perceived, too, that if he replied in the negative, he would fall under the lash of the Roman government and its base partisans. They would say that he was nothing more than a seditious man, and that he had come among them to foment trouble and sow discord. His answer to these men is well known. When they had handed him a penny of the tribute money, in answer to his request, he said: "Whose is this image and superscription?" They told him it was Cæsar's; and he answered: "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." By this he meant, Pay your tribute money, but preserve your character as Israelites. Submit yourself to men, but keep within the limits assigned by a religious conscience. Yield to the powers that be, but give to God the supreme control of your souls. What Divine wisdom there was in this answer! How appropriate it was

for Him who had said, "My kingdom is not of this world!"

The strength and power of Christ are also very evident in his word. Although he was meek and lowly in heart, he often spoke with more severity than the prophet of the wilderness. He knew how to tear off the mask that hid the repulsive deformity of those men who dealt in holy things, and yet "devoured widows' houses," and "made the law of none effect by their vain traditions." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are, within, full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Hypocrisy has often called out the most withering rebukes of men. They have been stimulated by it to use the strongest language of condemnation; but these words of Jesus are like the fire from heaven that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah.

And yet what tender, affectionate language he often used ! How touching were his appeals ! “I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me : for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

In the greatness of his love he wept over the waywardness of those who refused to love him. Listen to him as he says, “O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not !”

What shall I say of the holiness of our Savior’s precepts ? In reading them, or hearing them read, have we not often felt how very far we were from being what we ought to be ? Jesus taught us a lesson in true humility wher

he said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

And what a lesson in self-renunciation was these words: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me!"

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," are words designed to give us confidence in God.

"Thy will be done," is the language of true resignation, that resignation which every heart should feel.

I must not omit, in the enumeration of Christ's precepts, those truly divine words which, even if there were no other proof, would be proof that Jesus came down from heaven, and that he is the Son of God: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for

he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Finally, one feature of the Savior's words was the firm conviction and lively sense of divine things of which they are always the expression. Jesus spoke of heaven as an inhabitant of heaven would speak. His language, if we may be allowed the comparison, was that of the exile, describing his country, and thinking of his home. Every thing in this valley of the shadow of death led Jesus to think and speak of the invisible world and eternal realities. Every object in nature and all the details of human life furnished him with an occasion to call off the mind from things temporal to things spiritual. The growing grain reminded him of the development of the religious life in the soul. The firm, immovable mountain reminded him of the power of that faith that can remove mountains. The stream that flowed at his

feet suggested the "well of water springing up into everlasting life," and the bread that nourished the body the "living bread" that nourishes the soul. He used a child's petition to prove the efficacy of prayer, and the love of a father to describe the love of God.

And when he laid aside figurative language, and, after bringing heaven down to earth, attempted to raise a suffering world up to heaven, how wonderful was his language! He shows his disciples the great gathering-place on high, and reveals to them the blessedness of eternal life. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

Dearly beloved brethren, poor fellow-sinners, my companions in exile, are not these words the very words we need? And will you not

all turn to Jesus, and say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

If I have succeeded in convincing you of the truth, but not in persuading you to embrace it, may the work that has had so feeble a beginning in you be carried on! May you be led to embrace the truth, the Christ who is offered to you in the Gospel! Let me beseech you to read the Word of God, and to read it prayerfully. Begin to live according to the precepts that your consciences approve. Try the doctrines of Jesus, and you will soon see whether they are of God or not.

O, Shepherd of our souls, come thyself, and plead thine own cause in our hearts. Come, celestial friend, divine pilot, and conduct us into the port of faith, that, after having served thee on earth, we may glorify thee throughout all eternity.



### III.

#### THE TESTIMONY THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS GIVEN OF HIMSELF IN HIS LIFE AMONG MEN.

JOHN V, 36 : "*But I have greater witness than that of John : for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.*"

WE have seen that Jesus declared himself to be the Son of man and the Son of God, the Savior of the world and the King of heaven and earth, and that the authority of his words and the sublimity of his teachings attest the truth of his assertions. But did he add to the weight of precept the still greater weight of example? Holy in his words, was he also holy in his acts? Was his life always the expression of the elevated principles he professed, and of that pure, spotless morality that appeals to the conscience as well as to

the heart? In a word, was the life of Jesus among men, as well as his words, divine?

But, in the first place, let us ask, What is life? A celebrated physiologist has defined it to be "those united forces that resist death." This may be a good definition of the life of the brute, but not of the life of man, for it supposes that death is stronger than life in us. It brings us down to the level of the plant or the animal, and tells us that all we are capable of is preserving our bodies for a little time from the decay that awaits them. But this is a *material* definition. It is true that, in common with the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, we have a material life, a life that might be called the power of acting upon nature, and compelling it to serve us within the limits of our forces. Thus, plants extract from the ground those nourishing juices that give their leaves and petals their brilliant hues. Birds seek the food that is necessary to their subsistence; and the laborer manures, and plows, and prepares the

soil, and sows the seed that is to reward him for his labors by giving him bread. "The forces that resist death" are thus brought into play, and, in this respect, plants and birds, and all animals, and man are alike. They obey the laws of their nature. But this life, to which we have referred, is by no means the only life of man. There is in him another life, more noble and elevated, the life of the soul. Yes, there is in man a living soul. But a few facts will give you a clearer idea of my meaning than an abstract definition. A man sees an apple fall, and observes that the nearer it approaches the ground, the more rapid is its progress. Struck by this fact, he begins to *think*, and, after long and close observation, ascertains the law of falling bodies. He then avails himself of all the discoveries with which his predecessors have enriched science, and establishes the law of gravitation. This problem solved, he uncovers his head, and says with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his

handywork." This man knows what it is to *think*, and has therefore proved not only the law of gravitation, but the fact that the life that is in him is something very different from the life of plants and animals.

An invalid goes out into his garden, after a long sickness, to breathe the soft Spring air. He sits down in the sunshine, and his wife and children come around him with flowers and kind words, and although "the united forces" in him have with great difficulty "resisted death," he is full of life, for his eyes glisten with tears, and his heart overflows with love, as he bows his head and thanks God for his restoration. He loves his wife, and his children, and his God. This man can *love*, and the life that is in him is infinitely superior to animal life.

A poor man leaves his humble home in the morning to go in search of employment. There is no bread in the house, and he must earn some before night if he would not see his children suffering from hunger. He goes

every-where, offering his strong hands and willing heart, and, although he asks but small pay, he gets nothing but the answer, "We have nothing for you to do." Evening comes, and he goes home sad and dispirited, thinking of the tears that will be his only welcome when his children see his empty hands. The streets are dark and solitary, and there is a cold rain falling, but he does not heed it, for he is thinking of his family. Suddenly he treads on a purse that some one has accidentally dropped. He picks it up, and his first impulse is to keep it. "With this money," he says, "I can buy bread. The man who has lost it has probably no need of so small a sum; besides, no one saw me pick it up." But the voice of conscience makes itself heard. "Has no one seen you?" it asks. "Has not God seen you? You ought not to keep that money; it is not yours." The man quickens his steps, overtakes the owner of the purse, and, with a voice still trembling from the struggle he has had with himself, says: "You have dropped

your purse, sir; here it is." The stranger takes the purse, thanks him, and turns away, never suspecting the terrible struggle of the poor man. The suffering husband and father reaches his home, and enters his house with a heart at rest. He says to himself, "God will give me work to-morrow; he will send me bread."

In this struggle temptation has been resisted, a victory has been achieved, integrity has been preserved, and the man's superior nature has been triumphant, and he could tell you how much greater is the life of a man than that of a plant or an animal. His united *moral* forces have, indeed, resisted death.

To *think*, to *will*, to *love* distinguishes soul-life from all inferior life. It makes man what he is. If we would give the spiritual definition of life, we must call it "those united forces" by which we resist selfishness and sin. With this definition of life, we may venture to answer the question, Was the life of Jesus Christ divine? And I propose to divide it into four

questions that are really contained in the one question. Did Jesus control nature by his will, and vanquish death? Did he resist error? Did he resist sin? Did he triumph over selfishness? I propose to answer these questions, but as it would be impossible to do it within the limits of one sermon, I shall confine myself to the first question, and leave the remaining three for the next sermon.

Did Jesus Christ control nature by his will? We can not discuss this question without discussing the question of miracles; and, at the mention of this word miracles, I imagine I see the smile of infidelity on many faces before me. Miracles have been so abused, and so much that was merely the work of the imagination has received that name, that many minds have come at last to reject all miracles. I can appreciate the difficulties of such minds, while I deplore them from the depths of my heart. And yet all these difficulties could easily be met. I could prove here that miracles are attested by the testimony of the apostles,

who neither could nor would have wished to deceive us, and that history confirms their testimony; but, as this testimony would be very long, I shall confine myself to establishing the possibility of miracles, and mentioning those that Jesus Christ performed when he was on earth. What I have said of his teachings, and what I shall say of his moral life and of his influence over men will demonstrate that the New Testament is not a fable, but a history, and that the resurrection of Jesus was a necessary fact, and not a legend.

But a miracle, you say, is the subversion of the great Creator's laws, and he is unchangeable, so there can be no such thing as a miracle, and it is folly to believe it. This reasoning seems very plausible at first, but let us examine it. If we accept the conclusion to which it leads, we make the acceptance of evangelical truths impossible, for these truths all rest on a fact that is essentially miraculous, the coming of the Son of God to our world. We shall see that it amounts to nothing less



than tracing all things to blind chance, instead of to a personal, living God, every-where present in the affairs of man. What are we to understand by the fixedness of the laws of nature, and the immutability of God? A child is playing in a garden, and a flower attracts his attention. He picks it, and, after admiring it a few moments, throws it down. Separated from the stem, and wilted by the sun, and trodden under foot, it loses all its beauty, and is no longer what it was. According to the law of its nature this little flower ought to have preserved its freshness till evening, but it lost it in an hour. Now, is it true that the laws of nature were subverted by the hand of a child? No, certainly not, you say, for above that law in virtue of which a flower preserves its freshness is the intervention of man. Man, when he wishes to do it, can act upon nature. But God is immutable, you say. God is immutable? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that his wise decrees will all be accomplished, and that with him

"there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning?" or do you mean that God lives in a selfish isolation, and, insensible to our sorrows, abandons the destiny of the universe to the action of chance? We accept the first explanation, because it proclaims one of the perfections of God. As to the second, we repulse it with horror. It is a blasphemy, subversive of all morality and religion. What a child can do that he may have a flower in his hand, can not God do to prove his sovereignty, and to remind his forgetful creatures of his presence? If a child can thus control a law of nature, can not God control all the laws of nature when he is himself the author of them? Would not he be a poor clockmaker who could not accelerate or slacken the movement of a pendulum or repair a broken wheel? To deny the truth of miracles is, in fact, to deny that God has a will. The child picked the flower that, according to the law of nature, would have bloomed on its stem till night. But above the law of nature there was the will

of the child, you say. And we say, far above all the laws of nature there is the will of God.

To account for your infidelity, you talk of the fixedness of the laws of Nature. But do you know what these laws are? Are you ignorant of the fact that the knowledge of man is very limited? Have you failed to discover that science does little more than to thrust aside old difficulties, and bring forward new ones? You speak of the laws of gravitation, and cohesion, and attraction, but how can you know that these laws are any thing more than ideal conceptions, by which men arrive at the solution of problems? Every thing in nature is a phenomenon, and we know very little about any thing. We resemble prisoners, who imagine they see the broad extent of country and sky through the little hole in their dungeon. Eighteen centuries ago, Jesus said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." This was said with

reference to the work of the Spirit in the heart, but we may use it to illustrate the ignorance of man. Eighteen hundred years ago the people did not know whence came the wind, nor whither it went, and do we, to-day, know any more about it than they did? We may say to all human science what the Lord said to Job four thousand years ago: "Gird up now thy loins, like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me: Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Where is the way where light dwelleth? And, as for darkness, where is the place thereof? Knowest thou the ordinances of Heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?"

And Job, humbled and overwhelmed by the everlasting mysteries of creation, answered: "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."

Newton, and Pascal, and many others, have, with the same consciousness of ignorance, and with the same feeling of humility, repeated these words of the Idumean poet ; but, alas ! the *savants*, and even the ignorant, use very different language.

There is another objection to miracles which has probably occupied a prominent place in your mind. You say : " If miracles were once performed, why are they not now ? " I answer, that if miracles were continued from generation to generation, they would lose their distinctive character, and would cease to produce any effect, for they would soon be added to those phenomena that we daily witness without any surprise, although we can not explain them. A miracle is an exception to a general rule, not the rule itself, and therefore attracts our attention.

" But why could not the exception be produced at least once in every human life," you ask, " so that every generation might witness, for example, a resurrection from the

dead, in the name of Jesus Christ?" I reply, that if there are no longer miracles, it is, no doubt, because they are no longer necessary.

"To make faith grow," said Gregory the Great, "we must nourish it with wonders, just as we would water a young tree, till it had taken root and begun to grow."

In our day the conscience has been sufficiently prepared by a Christian education for the acceptance of the Gospel. I may affirm that it is easier to believe now than it was during the public ministry of Jesus Christ, and that we are, in this respect, as well as in many others, the objects of the special favor of Providence. There has been a Christian faith in the world for eighteen centuries, and there are, to-day, more than two hundred and sixty millions of men, to whom the name of the Crucified is a familiar name. The fact that Christ has so long been known, and that he is now known by so many in the world, is as convincing testimony for Christ as

miracles were in the time of Christ. The fact that so many have been enlightened is as strong testimony for Christ as was the cure of the blind man of Jericho. The spiritual resurrection of humanity by the power of the Gospel is testimony not at all inferior to the resurrection of Lazarus. Whatever may be the objections of infidelity, the sincere, honest man can answer that the Cross has for eighteen centuries been an object of increasing interest, and that St. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Pascal, Leibnitz, Newton, and many other of the finest geniuses the world has ever known, have found the foolishness of the Cross to be the wisdom and power of God. There is also an internal evidence, a hidden testimony—the experience of the heart—that the humble Christian can give. He can say, with the man born blind, “One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.” Thousands of believers can say to the infidel: “We can not answer all your objections, but it is none the less true that Jesus has given us

hope and peace, and that he abides in us as a friend and purifier."

"It is a chimera! an illusion!" exclaims the infidel, with a pride that moves our compassion, for he would like to possess this pretended chimera.

Ah, who proves as does the Christian that the Christian faith is no chimera, no illusion? Who proves as does the Christian the value of his principles, and the reality of his love for men? Who founds hospitals for the aged and asylums for children? Who gives his time, and his money, and his heart with equal liberality? Who visits the poor with help, and the sick with consolation? Who exposes his life to carry the good news of a Savior into a deadly climate, to stupid, dull people, or to wild savages who hang the bloody hair of their enemies on their cabin walls? Is it those who ostentatiously proclaim themselves to be the friends of the race, and the deliverers of the human mind from bondage? Can they show us Elizabeth Frys, or self-denying



missionaries? Do they visit the poor and the sick? No. They are annoyed by the tears of the poor, and are afraid of the fever of the sick. And surely they are not missionaries. They do not go to the tropics to do good, for it is too warm there; nor to Greenland, for it is too cold there.

Intent on their evil work at home, they have shaken the faith of the people in the doctrines of religion; they have lulled them to sleep with chimeras; they have destroyed their hope, and closed heaven against them; they have proved themselves both thieves and murderers, for they have stolen the faith of men and killed their souls. O, let us look well to it that none of us be found in their ranks!

There are many unbelievers who tell us that the works of the Christian are the fruit of pride and fanaticism. There is no pride in submitting to the authority of the crucified Savior; no fanaticism in trying to lead others to do it, or in praying with the sick, or the

degraded, or in reading the Bible to poor, ignorant children. And when the table of the Lord is spread in this temple, and rich and poor, masters and servants, the learned and the ignorant gather together around it to acknowledge their common misery, and their common interest in the blood of Jesus Christ, where is the fanaticism of it? Where is the pride of which the Christian is accused? Ah, infidelity—your infidelity, my hearers—proceeds from the heart and not from the head, and you are under condemnation. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” You ask for a miracle, not that you may believe it, but that you may deny it. You will not go to Christ for life. You are afraid of the truth, because it imposes obligations on those who receive and profess it, and because you wish to live in sin. “Religion,” says Pascal, “has enough light for those who want to see, and enough darkness for those

who do not want to see." God has thus willed it that men may be responsible, and free to accept or reject the Christian faith. We are compelled to believe that two and two make four, but are left free to believe or not believe in Jesus Christ, to be saved or be lost.

I come now to the testimony that Christ has given of himself in his power over Nature, and I shall examine some of his wonderful works, that we may see their simplicity and grandeur, and also their deep, spiritual meaning.

One day a poor paralytic was brought to him on a bed. He had heard of the power and pity of Christ, and, at his own request, was carried and laid at the feet of Jesus. The Great Physician read his heart, and at once welcomed him, in these words: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Such language as this would, no doubt, have surprised you, but it showed the Savior's far-reaching thought, and his deep consciousness

of the necessities of man's moral nature. It may be, my hearers, you think he ought to have healed the body of the paralytic before giving a thought to the healing of his soul. But the scribes had quite another thought. The law had given them a knowledge of sin, and an idea of the sovereignty of God, and when they heard what the Savior said to the paralytic they said among themselves, "This man blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus, who knew their thoughts, said to them: "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The man arose immediately, and walked away cured. The scribes were confounded, but not convinced, for their infidelity was not so much a difficulty of the mind as it was a sin of the heart. Jesus had healed both

the body and soul of the man, and had, at the same time, confounded infidelity and given powerful testimony of the truth. He had proved his power over the souls of men, and used this power to accomplish a loving purpose. All the miracles of Christ proved him to be a supernatural being, possessed of divine power, and using this power, not merely to destroy the consequences of sin, but sin itself, as the source of all evil. They all had a deeply spiritual meaning.

A frail boat containing Jesus and his disciples was tossed about on the tempestuous sea of Tiberias. The waves threatened to engulf it, and the Master was asleep. Overwhelmed with fear, the disciples awakened Jesus, exclaiming, "Master, Master, we perish!" "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" answered Jesus, at the same time speaking to the angry waves and commanding them to be still. He not only quieted the sea, but also the hearts of his disciples. And this miracle was not only proof of the power of the Son of man,

but was a lesson in faith never to be forgotten by his disciples. It was also a lesson for us. Tossed about, as we are, on the stormy sea of life, we are like the little boat on the sea of Tiberias, and while, as children of God, we have deplored the feebleness of our faith, have we not learned by this miracle to say, The Celestial Pilot is with me? Whatever may be the trials of my life, or the sorrows of my heart, or the temptations of the world, my Savior will never abandon me. The last wave will bear me into port.

But let us look at another example of the vivifying power of Jesus Christ. That you may have the story in its eloquent simplicity, I repeat it to you as it is given to us, and not in my own words.

“And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been

here my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said she went her way, and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that she arose quickly and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her,

saying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus, therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he has seen corruption, for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?



Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said : Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me ; and I knew that thou hearest me always ; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot, with grave clothes ; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

How truthful this story appears in all its features ! How natural were the words of the sisters of Lazarus : " Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died ! " Their tender reproaches and sad regrets were such as any heart, crushed by a grief like theirs, would have expressed. In Martha's replies to the Savior we can see the developments of her faith and hope, and in the whole story we may see the delicate shades of difference

between the dispositions of Martha and Mary, and all who were present. Martha was always bustling and active, Mary docile and quiet, and the throng ungrateful, mentioning past kindnesses only to reproach Jesus for not having showered upon them still more.

I do not know to which to give the greater prominence in this story—to the gentleness and tenderness of Jesus or to his power, to the simplicity or to the grandeur of his words. Shall I speak to you of those sacred tears that reveal him to be our brother? Shall I speak of those tears that give us a right to weep while we preserve our faith and hope? Shall I say to you, as I hear these words, “I am the resurrection and the life,” never man spake like Jesus! He has the “words of eternal life.” Shall I say with Martha, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God?”

O what can the infidel say as he reads this story? Is it not easier to believe in the resurrection of Lazarus than to doubt the

sincerity of the ocular witness who tells us of the miracle? Could it have been possible for any one to get up so ingenious a story? And can we not distinguish the true from the false? Will you assert that Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, and Jesus Christ also conspired to invent this story? Or, falling back upon the ridiculous explanations that have been given of this miracle, will you say that Lazarus was not dead, that the air of the cave roused him from his lethargy, and that Jesus had been previously informed of it? Compare this miracle with the legends of the saints of the middle ages, with those pretended miracles that blind superstition even now accepts, the liquefaction of the blood of St. Janvier, and the tears that the wooden madonnas shed on holy Friday, and you will find a difference analogous to that which exists between light and darkness, between truth and falsehood. False miracles are proof of true miracles, as counterfeit articles are proof of genuine articles.

There was no failure, my hearers, in the power of Jesus over nature. He always bent nature to the exigencies of every case, whenever he saw fit, as the tempest bends the reed. He controlled it as the bit and bridle do the steed, as the rudder does the vessel. In the greatness of his power, he said to the messengers of John the Baptist, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard ; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached." After this an angel said to Mary Magdalene, as she stood by the sepulcher weeping, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." Yes, an angel said it, and the world soon believed it, and we also believe it. If it were not true I should not be in this pulpit, and you would not be in this temple of worship. The truth of the incomplete definition of the physiologist was indeed proved in the resurrection of Christ : "Life is those united forces that resist death."

Fullness of life was in Christ. He had not only the "power to lay down his life, but power to take it up again." By his resurrection he taught us to say: "O, Death! where is thy sting? O, Grave! where is thy victory?"

All I can now do is to affirm the fact that in Christ there was fullness of life, leaving it to our next sermon—in which we shall speak of the spiritual life of Jesus—to prove it to your hearts. It is on this, more than on the testimony of the apostles, that we shall rely for proof that the resurrection of Jesus was as necessary to the glory of God as to our peace.

But before closing I wish to take an aggressive position, and return the accusation of credulity that the infidel has hurled at those who have received the Gospel. Christianity has too long been satisfied with standing on the defensive. It is time it was the attacking power, for it has proved its own strength and the weakness of its adversaries, and has thus earned the right, not only to

repel outrage and raillery, but to show the folly and insincerity of its enemies. Faith is not only a buckler to those who possess it, but it puts in their hands the sword of the Spirit, and the sword should not always sleep in the scabbard. We believe that Jesus died, and *rose again*. Yes, he *rose again*, and we affirm that it could not have been otherwise. He suffered, but he entered into his glory. The bands of death could not hold the Prince of Life. He had the power to rise again, and it was necessary he should rise, and he did rise. He was the sovereign Lord, the just and holy God, and the loving Savior who would not let his plan for our redemption fail.

With Pascal, we can say, "We believe in those witnesses who lay down their lives for the truth," and we accept the testimony of the apostles and of history. But, more than all this, we feel that this Jesus, whose memory we honor and whose person we love, abides in our hearts.

But infidels have denied his resurrection. In the first centuries they said that the disciples of Jesus had his body taken out of the tomb, and that they bribed those who guarded the sepulcher to do it. Thus they dragged to the bar of their tribunal the disciples, who proclaimed openly, and in presence of those who crucified the Savior, that Jesus had risen. They pretended that these watchers at the tomb were punished, and forbidden to divulge the truth. At a later day infidels proclaimed, through Porphyry, Julian the Apostate, and others of their writers, that Jesus was a magician, and delivered unto death those who believed in his name. Later still, they turned from the odious to the ridiculous, and denied history, and made humanity an idiot who remembers nothing from one day to another. Infidels are insincere men, and you in this assembly who are infidels are—we say it in all kindness—insincere men, and we return the accusation of hypocrisy that you are never weary of casting at the sincere Christian,

whose humble, spiritual life condemns your pride and your sinful courses.

But it may be that some among you will say, We deny neither history, nor the New Testament, nor the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nor the sincerity of Christians, but still we are doubters. We want to believe, but we doubt. You doubt? What do you doubt? The fact that there is no effect without a cause? You do not doubt that. You believe it. It is a necessity of your mind to believe in this axiom. Let me ask, Would not the Christian Church, the greatest fact in the annals of humanity, lose its generating cause if the miracle of Christ's resurrection could be proved false? Do you doubt the power of God, by which this wonderful miracle was wrought? But this power continually shines out before your eyes in the wonders of creation. And can you doubt the love that reserved the great miracle of the resurrection of Christ to open your heart to the hope of a blessed immortality? Poor slaves of sin and



sorrow, what would you be without this hope, and how, without it, could you bear the burden of life? If an invisible hand had not rolled away the stone from the sepulcher where lay the body of the *Desire* of the *nations*, you would have been the sport of inexorable destiny, and the love of God would not have been manifested to you. O, if you do, indeed, wish to be believers, do not try to blind your eyes to the Christian faith by forgetting yourselves and the necessities of your nature. Do not allow yourselves to be deceived by terrestrial things, and the noise and pomp of the world. Search diligently for the truth, and seek that God whose power and love you can not deny. He is the common Father of us all, and if you, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!"

## IV.

THE TESTIMONY THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS  
GIVEN OF HIMSELF IN HIS INNER,  
SPIRITUAL LIFE.

JOHN V, 36: *"But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works that the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."*

YOU no doubt remember the point from which we started in our last sermon, and the conclusion to which we arrived. After establishing the fact that the words of Jesus were divine, we inquired if his life, also, were divine. But before we answered that question we answered another—What is life? By examining its different manifestations, we saw that life is not only a certain power over nature, the union of forces that resist death, but that it is also the power of thinking, and willing, and loving, the union of those spiritual

forces that resist error, and selfishness, and all sin. Then, confining ourselves to the more sensible, external manifestations of power in the life of Jesus, we showed him to be a man, approved of God, and revealed as God by the series of wonderful miracles that were, at last, crowned by the greatest of all his miracles, that of his own resurrection. We are, to-day, to go still further, and examine, so far as we may, the inner life of Christ; and, since he has been presented to us as the Son of man and the Son of God, to prove it to ourselves if he were really divine in thought, and holy in will, and infinite in love. These questions settled, there will be but one left for us to answer. Eighteen centuries ago Christ died and rose again; and has he, during all this time, had an existence as a divine being? If we may be allowed the expression, he pre-existed in prophecy as God, and he lived on earth as a divine being. But does he still live to support his claim to divinity? This last question we will answer in our next sermon.

Our first question with regard to the inner life of Jesus is this: Did he resist error? Was he in possession of the truth? Was he divine in thought? In the second sermon of the series this question was, in part, answered. It is particularly by his spoken words that a man manifests himself to us, and shows us the character of his thoughts and feelings, and we have already come to the conclusion that never man spake like Jesus, that he has "the words of eternal life," that his doctrines enlighten the mind, that his pure morality commends itself to the conscience, and that his appeals move the heart. But it is the different parts of the spiritual structure rather than the entire structure itself that has attracted our attention, and we have, therefore, failed to see it as we might. The man of genius shows his genius more in the general plan he has conceived than in the particular truths he expresses. It is to the supreme end Jesus Christ had in view that I wish to call your attention. But I must say to you that

when I first set myself to the task of answering the question, What was the definite plan of Jesus Christ? I was seized with a feeling of regret that I had undertaken to answer such a question. It is in vain that I have collected the treasures of memory, and sought to use them in giving an answer to this great question. It is in vain that I have read the best writers, and consulted Augustine, and Pascal, and—more than all—St. Paul to learn the definite thought, the one aim and end of Christ, for I have no where found a satisfactory answer to the question and a complete solution of the problem. It may be that somewhere in the depths of eternity, somewhere in that unknown world to which we are hastening, the truth will burst upon us, and our question at last be answered. But at present this divine plan can be seen only “through a glass darkly.” No one has ever been able to comprehend it in all its fullness; no one has been able to unroll the plan of eternal wisdom. Neither the doctrine

of redemption, nor that of the kingdom of heaven, nor the holy law of love furnishes an answer to the question; for redemption was only a means to an end, the kingdom of heaven was only one phase of the eternal reign of Jesus, and the law of love was but the reflection of the love of the Savior of the world.

What has been called the plan of Jesus for the happiness of the human race, the project of Jesus to establish a universal religion that would meet all the wants of his creatures proved his religion to be entirely unlike the religions of men. Listen to Jesus of Nazareth as he says: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." See him as he associated with him in his work of spiritual regeneration twelve obscure fishermen, coming at his call to be "fishers of men." Follow him as he is about to leave the world, and listen to him as he says to his disciples, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Ghost." And tell me, did not Jesus Christ conceive a plan that was infinitely beyond human imagination or expectation? No one before him had ever made so vast a plan, and no one after him was able to conceive any thing like it. Mahomet said to his successors, "Conquer all nations, and cut off the heads of those who will not bow before you." What a poor parody on Christ's religion of love was Mahomet's religion of brute force!

But the plan of Christ reached, as we have reason to suppose, beyond the formation of the great human family, beyond their redemption, and beyond every thing that could be hoped or expected, or even dimly seen. The eye of Jesus fathomed the infinite ocean of eternity as ours fathoms the little, limpid stream. His language was the language of man, but his thoughts were the thoughts of God. And who has been able to comprehend his grand design? No one. Eighteen centuries have passed since Christianity was introduced into the world, but who has ever

succeeded in reducing it to one theory, to one complete system? The ignorant and unlearned, thinkers and philosophers, enter the field where Christ has sowed the seed and pick an ear of corn and make a sheaf, but who has ever united all the sheaves into one perfect sheaf? Who has fathomed the one great design of Christ? In a practical point of view, there is nothing more simple than Christianity. In those few words that the child repeats at his mother's knee—"Our Father who art in heaven"—is comprised the whole of the Christian religion. God as a father, and his creatures as brothers, are presented to us in those few expressive words that give us the moral and religious doctrine of Jesus every thing that is directly applicable to our wants. But, if we attempt to fathom this revelation and learn the whole of this great truth, we shall find ourselves in the presence of infinity itself. To convince you of this, let me repeat those words of Jesus which I think give us a clearer understanding



of the breadth, and hight, and depth of his wonderful plan than any other I might quote. They were not addressed to his creatures, but to God the Father, and so deep is their meaning that they will, for all future time, exercise human thought, proving to man his weakness, and demonstrating to him the divinity of the plan that Christ proposed to himself. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they, also, may be one in us."

Remove for a moment, in imagination, the roof of this temple, my brethren, and contemplate the celestial spheres that roll over your head, and count, if you can, those luminous worlds that God has hung in space. They are like the sand upon the seashore, and can not be counted; neither can the immense distance that separates them from the earth be calculated, for no astronomer has ever been able to measure it. Let us consider that every one of these stars, whose light reaches us in spite of their incalculable distance from

us, may be a sun more resplendent than ours, and having, like ours, its planetary system, while our sun—the center of a few planets—is, perhaps, itself nothing more than a humble planet, moving with its *cortége* around one of these immense globes. Your minds are at once lost in the thought of this infinite space and these innumerable spheres, but this effort of your imagination is nothing when compared with the effort you would have to make to measure the breadth and depth of the supreme design of Jesus. “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they, also, may be one in us.”

It is the final, perfect union of spiritual beings in God that Jesus asked, and he will certainly receive what he asked, for the Father always hears him. His prayer was that the creatures of his love might be a holy unity, living in God as he lived in the Father and the Father in him—living in God, and yet retaining their personality—thinking, willing, loving, each for himself, and yet harmonizing

with each other and with God in thought, and will, and love, so that they might all be able to say, We think as God thinks, we will as God wills, we love as God loves.

If we will think of our selfishness and littleness, of our narrow rivalries, of the moral distance between us and God, of our rebellion, and sin, and ignorance, it will give us a glimpse of the greatness of Christ's design, and of its moral height, infinitely beyond the mysteries of the sky as it is. By a little effort of the imagination I can see that the annihilation of the force that holds all bodies in their place might be possible. But the voluntary submission of all the moral forces to the will of God, the annihilation of sin, and the destruction of deceit and falsehood is a work far beyond my prevision, and a work that entirely bewilders me. The second creation is, indeed, more mysterious than the first, but I will not dwell on it, for when we soar into those mysterious regions where the eternal mind alone can sustain itself we grow dizzy, and weary,

and out of breath, and sink at last into mute adoration and silent contemplation of Christ, of that Christ who not only resisted error and perceived the truth, but was himself truth.

Another question we have to ask is, Did Jesus really resist sin? Was he holy? The reply of the Savior has preceded mine. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" was his answer to his enemies. And to the supreme Judge of all men he said: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Thus did he challenge the scrutiny of men, and he was not afraid even of the scrutiny of that God who reads the inmost secrets of the heart. Can you comprehend the assurance of such conscious holiness, and the infinite distance it supposes between Jesus and all men?

The chief of the apostles, when looking at Jesus, felt himself to be the "chief of sinners,"

and the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on his bosom, was a sinner. The dearest friends of Christ were sinners, and we may all say of ourselves, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us." But Christ was not a sinner, as his own testimony proves. And do we understand the value of that testimony? He declared himself to be without sin. He affirmed that he had lived in the world without participating in any way in its universal guilt; and, more than this, he affirmed that he had done the will of God perfectly, that he had finished the work given him to do, and had been faithful in all things.

That you may the better understand the divinity of Christ's assertions, enter into yourselves and think of what you are. Measure your thoughts, and feelings, and actions, not by human laws, or by the opinions of a frivolous and corrupt world, but by Christ's rule of pure morality. Think of the use you have made of your time; think of your wasted life,

of your selfishness, of your self-complacency, of your idle, foolish conversation, of your secret faults, and then remember that there once lived in the world a man who declared himself to be perfectly holy—a Being who asserted that he had risen above all temptation, and given as a legacy to humanity the example of a pure and holy life in a sinful, perverse world. Let us acknowledge, my hearers, that if this man spoke the truth he deserves our highest admiration and love, and that if he spoke falsely he was the most insane of all men.

And now, my unbelieving friends, let me put into your hands the four Gospels, those biographies of Jesus, written by four men who were worthy of all confidence. They did not confer together, but each saw and wrote from his own point of view, and I recommend their writings to you. They will acquaint you with the public and private life of Jesus, with his relations to the people and to his disciples. They will show him to you in his exaltation

and in his humiliation. You will see him mingling with the crowd in the temple, or conversing with his friends under the humble roof of the beloved family in Bethany, or talking to Pilate and Caiaphas, or to a poor man "sitting at the receipt of customs," or to a "woman who was a sinner." Take all the words and actions of Jesus, separately or as a whole, and examine them and pass judgment upon them, and we defy you, whatever your professed infidelity may be, to find a fault in his life, a stain on his soul, or an imperfection in his nature. And, more than this, we defy you to conceive of a noble sentiment, or of any real virtue or good moral quality which did not exist in him in a perfection far beyond any thing we can imagine.

The moral character of Jesus is perfect, and, like the precepts of the Gospel, commends itself to the consciences of all men. It is the harmonious reunion of all the virtues of which the imagination, aided by the heart, can give us an idea—an idea very inferior to

the reality, it is true, but still an idea. It is the expression of the true, and the beautiful, and the good, and is, therefore, a model for all men, whatever may be their social position, age, education, or nationality.

It would be useless for us to try to determine the prominent virtue, or particular quality, or special sentiment that formed the foundation of the moral nature of Jesus, for his nature, in a certain sense, escapes all analysis. Job was a model of patience, Solomon was a model of wisdom, St. Paul a model of faith, St. John a model of love, but Jesus was *the model*. He united and concentrated in himself all these virtues; all are equally developed, and all exist in the highest degree of perfection. Is it said that humility was a particularly shining trait in Jesus Christ? That is true. Who was ever so humble as the Son of Mary? Did he not declare that he "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister?" And did he not take the position of a servant when he washed his disciples'



feet? But, on the other hand, what dignity there was in Jesus! How he claimed the power that his perfect holiness gave him when he said to Pilate, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice!"

Is it said that tenderness and compassion were very remarkable in the character of Jesus? This can not be disputed, and, to prove it, it would be unnecessary to recall more than one of the many incidents of his life. All his miracles were works of mercy. He welcomed all who came to him, and he suffered little children to approach him, and laid his hands on their heads and blessed them. And yet how rigorous and inflexible was his justice! How he rebuked vice and hypocrisy! How he drove from the temple the buyers and sellers who made his Father's house "a den of thieves!"

Do any say that the whole life of Jesus was

complete submission to the will of God, and that he yielded himself to the Father's providential decrees with a resignation that was always full of nobleness and serenity? This is true. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt," was the rule of his life, and not the expression of a fleeting sentiment or a religious emotion. But, at the same time, how full of great activity was his life! How he brought into play all the activities and energies of his mind, and all the moral forces of his nature! He "went about doing good," and availed himself of all opportunities for winning men to God. He even made opportunities, and awakened dead consciences to life, and anticipated the wants of the heart, and always and every-where did the will of his Father, leaving us a perfect "example that we should follow in his steps."

Will it be said that the firmness and unconquerable perseverance of Christ attracted great notice? This can not be denied. Ignorance, and envy, and hatred inveighed against him, but he bore it all. He endured outrage and

raillery, persecution and ignominy. Nothing disturbed him. Nothing extorted from him any expression of fear or irritated feeling. He pursued his work as a majestic river pursues its course, without being disturbed by the stones that are thrown into its depths by the hand of a child. And yet how exquisite was his sensibility! How full was his heart of tender, affectionate feeling! When told that his disciples were carrying out his designs, and working among the poor Galileans, how his heart lighted up with joy! And when Lazarus died, and Mary and Martha were overwhelmed with grief, how he made their sorrow his own, and mingled his tears with theirs, weeping at the grave!

Do you say that Jesus showed the greatness of his nature in that love of family, and friends, and country which is always stronger than any other love? Yes, this is true. When a child he submitted to his parents, and when he was in the agonies of death his last thought was for his mother, who stood weeping at the foot

of the cross. He confided her to that disciple whom he loved. He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son;" and to John, "Behold thy mother." But he knew how to guard himself against that selfishness that too often mingles with the holiest home affections, giving them a wrong direction, and making them exclusive and unjust. Joseph and Mary had been seeking Jesus three days, and at last, finding him in the temple disputing with the doctors, they reproached him for having given them so much anxiety and trouble, but he answered, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Another time, when he was talking to the people about the kingdom of heaven, his mother and brothers, influenced by motives unknown to us, wanted to see him, and turn off his mind from the holy duties of his ministry, but he quietly replied to the messenger who told him that his "mother and brothers were standing without, desiring to speak to him," "Who is my mother? and who are my

brethren?" Then he stretched forth his hands toward his disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Like us, Jesus felt, also, the love of country. That word country, that thrills the heart, reminding us, as it does, of the place of our birth and the home of our childhood, and quickening our memory of dead hopes and dead friends, had power to move the heart of Jesus. He himself said that he was "sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and he accepted the laws, and institutions, and government of his nation. One day as he drew nigh to Jerusalem, where he was soon to die, he could not restrain his tears as he thought of the approaching destruction of the temple and the untold sorrows that were about to overwhelm his ungrateful country. But how free from all fanaticism and envy was his love for his country! How it was controlled

by that superior love that carries the heart to heaven, while the feet tread the soil of earth!

Another peculiarity of the love of Christ was that he did not repress and restrain it, or narrow down his heart to a few of his own countrymen. He healed the servant of the Roman centurion and the daughter of the "woman of Canaan." He offered the "woman of Samaria" "living water, springing up into everlasting life," and rejoiced in the thought that "many would come from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven."

He loved not only his country, but the world; he was a man as well as a citizen. If he poured out his heart to his disciples, if he shared his bread with them, if he commended them to God in prayer, his heart went out to all suffering humanity also. He multiplied the loaves for the multitude. He prayed for all who should believe on his name, and his

love embraced the whole world. He was not only the son of Abraham, but the universal Redeemer.

Jesus Christ knew how to blend in his own character those virtues that were apparently contradictory, and avoid what has justly been called, in all great historical characters, "the faults of their virtues." He was firm without being hard, noble without being proud, prudent without being crafty, courageous without being rash, sympathizing without being weak. And what rendered his character still more remarkable was that, although he was the object of the abuse of men of blind passions who hated him, he never resorted to boasting to justify himself before the people. When he inspired admiration, as he sometimes did, he often stole away from the crowd. He never paraded his virtues before any one, neither did he ever make any attempt to prove his divinity by repressing or concealing those feelings that are inherent in human nature. "Strike me, but listen to me," said

Themistocles nobly, but yet proudly, to the general who was about to strike him.

"If I have spoken evil," said Jesus, "bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

"I tremble, but it is with the cold," said Bailly as he was led to the place of execution through the crowd, who were more anxious, if possible, to catch him manifesting signs of fear than they were to torture him with the sight of the cruel punishment that awaited him.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," said Christ. "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Centuries have passed since the life of Christ was given to the world, and there has been great improvement in public morals, and great progress in religious ideas, and the New Testament will always be considered the living picture of perfect holiness, the ideal of human perfection realized, the inimitable likeness of



the Holy and the Just. Jesus has long been regarded as a model by the old man and the child, by the rich and the poor, by the slave and the master, by the African under the scorching sun of the tropics, and by the Greenlander shivering in the midst of the eternal ice of the pole. The first Adam was the head of humanity; the second Adam has become its moral center. As he looks at Jesus the hardened criminal is softened, and as the debauchee regards him his scornful smile dies away. The Crucified is no longer scorned and reviled. Men prostrate themselves before him. They look at the blood streaming from his body, at the crown of thorns, at the derisive scepter, at the sufferer, calm in his pain, great in his humiliation, and sublime in his ignominy, and exclaim with Pilate, "Behold the man," the perfect man, the Holy and the Just.

Modern infidelity has seen and understood all this, and after reading the Gospels and studying the life of Jesus, to find, if possible,

a shadow on the picture, a defect in the diamond, has turned pale before this proof, the moral evidence of which is superior to a miracle, or to a sign from heaven.

Wiser than the serpent that wore itself out in unavailing efforts to gnaw a file, the infidel has closed the New Testament, and said, "The character of Jesus is beautiful, the story of his life is sublime, but it is only a fancy picture. This New Testament story is nothing more than a romance."

Jesus Christ an imaginary personage! His life a romance! This has been the last resort of infidelity. And it is a remarkable fact that this judgment of the life of Christ was not expressed ages ago, if it be correct judgment. Eighteen centuries have come and gone since the life of Christ was given to the world and its truth sealed with the blood of the martyrs, but never, till its friends and its enemies had examined it and unanimously agreed to admit the authenticity of at least the process, did infidelity pass this judgment upon it. It would

have been so easy for the infidel to use this weapon when Christianity was first established, it is, indeed, singular that it was never employed till ages had passed away. Does the life of Jesus, then, belong to fabulous times? No. Is it not most plainly a part of history? And is not the immense influence it has exercised over men undeniable proof of its reality? Was not the age of Augustus and Tiberius as well known as the age of Louis XIV? Did not Tacitus, the heathen historian, register the date of the death of Jesus?

"It happened," he registered, "under the procurator Pontius Pilate." Is it not true that sixty years after this event, according to the testimony of the same historian, the plebeians of Rome gave the name Christian to the numerous disciples of the Crucified? Can not the caprice of oral tradition be easily distinguished from the calmness and impartiality of history? Christians who have rejected oral tradition, as we have, are not afraid to point

out its incoherences and absurdities, that historical truth may appear in a still stronger light. Tradition seized upon the life of Jesus; it presumed to supply the place of history. It dared, for example, to relate the story of the childhood of Jesus. It represented him, among other things, as throwing into a kettle of dye the dyer's stuffs, which, on being taken out, were all found to be exactly the color, and even the very shade the dyer desired. It also represented him as making little clay birds, and breathing upon them in such a way that they immediately spread their wings and vanished into the air.

But let us leave not only oral tradition, but historical testimony, for it is not on that foundation I wish to stand, though time will strengthen it more and more. I propose to confine myself wholly to the Gospels, considered independently of the testimony of authenticity that history furnishes. Let us notice that we have more than one picture of Jesus. We have four. And how could all

the four be in such perfect agreement if Christ existed only in the imagination? In painting, does the ideal of beauty that Raphael represents resemble that of Murillo or Correggio? The moral character of Jesus is unique, and worthy of our highest admiration. It can not be compared with any other, and yet the infidel presumes to say they are not the likeness of any one. But who, then, could these bold, astonishing geniuses have been who succeeded perfectly in making ideals of holiness and love, and offering them to the world, and leading the world to accept them? They must, certainly, have been men of Jewish origin, but nothing comes in such direct conflict with the national prejudice of the Jews as the Gospel, and nothing could resemble less the Jewish type, such as the formal Pharisees and unbelieving Sadducees had conceived, than the New Testament picture of Jesus Christ.

But again, these men must have been vile impostors—deceitful, crafty, hypocritical writers—using imaginary names, and, with the

appearance of perfect sincerity, palming off upon men as history the life of a fictitious personage. And their faultless, spotless works, that are infinitely superior to the works of Plato and Socrates, must have had their source in corrupt hearts and disordered imaginations.

To avoid acknowledging the divine authority of the New Testament the infidel has, indeed, involved himself in difficulty. He has heaped improbability upon improbability, and absurdity upon absurdity, and fallen into the strangest contradictions. Let me give as testimony against their insane reasonings the testimony of Rousseau, or rather a confession extorted from him by the truth. "I must acknowledge," he says, "that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me, and that their purity and holiness speak to my heart. When compared with them, how small and inferior appear the pompous works of philosophers! Can a book that is at once so sublime and simple be the work of men? And can it be that He of whose life it is a history was

nothing more than a man? Does he speak at all like an enthusiast or like an ambitious sectary? No. What sweetness and gentleness there is in all his words! What pure morality! What touching grace in his instructiveness! How elevated are his maxims! What profound wisdom he manifested in all his intercourse with men! How wise, and yet how just were all his answers to the questions of men! How perfect was his self-control! Can we say that the history of Christ's life was carefully and leisurely invented so as to have the appearance of perfect truth? But the facts in the life of Socrates, that no one disputes, are more feebly attested than the facts in the life of Christ, and this objection does nothing more than to set the difficulty aside. It does not meet it. It would be more difficult to conceive of the possibility of four men conspiring to fabricate this book than to conceive it to be the work of but one man. But no Jewish author could ever have imagined such high, pure morality, and such a perfect

life. The New Testament has such grand, striking, truthful characters—characters so perfectly inimitable that, if it were not true, the inventor would be more wonderful than the hero of the book.”

Then this incomparable, matchless man is no fictitious character. He has really lived in the world; his feet have trodden our ungrateful, rebellious earth. He has suffered as we suffer, and wept as we weep, but without sin. Once, and only once, perfect holiness has breathed the corrupt air that we breathe. And shall we stand hesitating and disputing the claims of Jesus upon our reason and our hearts? Shall we refuse him the works, the names, the attributes he has claimed? He has said, “I am the Son of God.” “All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.” “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” He has said all this, and I believe him, for I am a sinner and he is holy; I am a man and he is God.

Let us now answer the last question that we



proposed to answer in this sermon: Did Jesus really resist selfishness, and love us with an infinite love? To you who know the joy of faith, and who would love to have all in this temple feel, with you, the gratitude that the love manifested in Golgotha inspires, does it not seem that to ask this question is to answer it? And does it not almost offend you to have it discussed in this pulpit? We will not discuss it. We will enter into no argument to prove that Christ loved us with an infinite love, but will only give the simple facts in the case.

We have already seen that Jesus had a heart full of all generous affections. They were the life and soul of all his actions. He loved the afflicted whom he consoled, the sick whom he cured, the sinner whom he pardoned, and the disciples whom he instructed, and to whom, in his touching farewell, he promised to send the Comforter. But the more shining manifestation of his infinite, inexhaustible love was seen in his long, self-imposed

martyrdom, in his perfect self-sacrifice, and in the continual immolation of himself. Imagine, if you can, the perpetual sadness of his life, misunderstood and unappreciated even by his disciples, subject to the abuse of hateful, envious men, despised and insulted by proud Pharisees, and stoned by the ignorant populace. Imagine this, and then consider that he willingly endured it all. Being rich, he became poor; living in eternal blessedness in the bosom of his Father, he came to live in this world of sin, and not only tasted of the cup of sorrow, but took deep draughts, and knew all its bitterness. Poverty, painful toil, abandonment, ingratitude, treachery were the portion of his cup. He was spared nothing. His life was as wonderful in the intensity of his sufferings as in the perfection and grandeur of his holiness. And for whom did he endure all this? For you, for me, for all men; for the guilty, for wayward children who deserved his anger and condemnation.

But is this all he endured? No. Follow

me to the garden of Olives, and look at that man, bent under the weight of his sufferings, and "sweating great drops of blood falling down to the ground." It is Jesus. His disciples are asleep; Judas alone is awake. See the treacherous disciple steal up to Jesus and give him a kiss, a kiss more odious than the contemptuous treatment of the crazy populace that spit in his face. This act, hypocritical as it was, extorted from Jesus only a few words, and they were words of gentleness: "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Follow me to Mt. Calvary, and we shall see the man Christ Jesus struggling along, stooping under the weight of his cross. His shoulders are bruised, for the cross is heavy. There is blood on his forehead, and blood on his pathway, and now and then he stops, being overcome with exhaustion. Several women, moved by the sad spectacle, are unable to restrain their tears. "Daughters of Jerusalem," he says, forgetting himself as he beholds their

grief, "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck."

The cross is at last raised, and the exhausted man is extended on it, and, with stroke after stroke, the nails are driven into the hands and feet of the sublime sufferer. But while they are tearing his flesh he seems to forget himself, and to think only of his enemies. Listen to him as he says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Listen again. In the midst of the vociferations of the populace, and the raillery of the Pharisees, and the blasphemy of the impenitent thief, who seems to forget his own sufferings in the insults he offers to Jesus, there rises a new cry of anguish from the heart of that "man of sorrows" as he takes upon himself the sins of the world. "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!"

The sky over his head is brass, and as this lamentation rises to heaven it unavails the mysterious grief with which the Holy Victim is wrestling. And does it not exceed and utterly confound your highest thought? Does it not stir your souls to their deepest depths, and reveal to you the infinite, far-seeing love of God? O, let us resist no longer! Let there be no more doubts, no more reasonings, no more objections. Let us say, O, Christ, thy mysterious, infinite love has moved and won our hearts. Thou hast died for the world, and thou alone art our Savior God.

## V.

THE TESTIMONY THAT THE CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH HAS GIVEN OF JESUS  
CHRIST.

ROMANS VI, 9: "*Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.*"

THE "Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God," that Word, which is the life, the light of men, shone in the darkness; and although the darkness did not comprehend it, it still shone there. With this Divine light shining upon him, man, notwithstanding his terrible fall, preserved the hope of restoration. In spite of their prejudices, and errors, and gross superstitions, the Jews lived in hope of a Redeemer. They foresaw his coming. Israel, the prophetic nation, was so enlightened by the Divine Savior, that it anticipated his

advent, and even determined the nature of the great redemption work. Jesus Christ, as we have before said, existed in prophecy as a Divine Being. It was he who inspired the representative saints of the people of God, and colored the thoughts of the Abrahams, and Davids, and Isaiahs, and Daniels. Eighteen centuries have passed since the "Word was made flesh," Christ lived among us, full of grace and truth, and gave full proof of his divinity. How often did he assure the world that he was God, the promised and expected Messiah, come to seek and save that which was lost, and to give eternal life to all who would believe in him! And these astonishing pretensions he supported by speaking the language of the skies; by manifesting continually the sublimity of his thoughts; by living a holy life; by loving the world with an infinite love; by bending nature to his will; and by rising, at last, victorious over the grave.

But as the revelation of himself in prophecy,

and his wonderful life on earth, do not alone prove him to be a Divine being, it is necessary to prove that he still lives, and we finish this defense of Christ by verifying the affirmation of the apostle: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." Eighteen centuries separate us from the day when his tomb was found empty; but we can question them. We can ascertain from the ages that have elapsed since the death and resurrection of Christ, if time, that consumes every thing by its slow, destructive action, has had the power to lay the Redeemer in his grave again. They will tell us whether it has been with Jesus as with the wise and mighty of this world, who leave nothing but their dust and the memory of their glory to future generations. If Christ be indeed the Son of God, the life and the light of men, it must be that he will be with his Church till the end of the world, living in the hearts of his children, and proving the truth of his words: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the



ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." May we all so view his victories and spiritual conquests as to be led to the cordial acceptance of the salvation he bought for us at the price of his blood!

Let us once more place ourselves at the foot of Mt. Calvary, where, in imagination, we have stood before, and seen Jesus on the cross, pouring out his life for men. Let us, for the time, try to forget what we know of the history of the last eighteen hundred years, and imagine ourselves standing among the crowd gathered around the cross, and seeing every thing, not from our present point of view, but from that point of view from which we should then have regarded the scene. Let us imagine ourselves as possessing nothing more than human foresight of the future. And what would we have said? Why, we would have said, Here is a man who has stood before Jewish and Roman tribunals, and after being condemned by the

Sanhedrim and the procurator of Tiberias, and the magistrates, and the people, has at last been hung up between two obscure malefactors on a gibbet, reserved for the vilest of criminals. The priests and the people are insulting him, and even one of the poor thieves, dying at his side, is treating him with contempt. He is without protectors, without friends. Even his disciples have forsaken him ; one has betrayed him, and another has denied him, and all have fled, and he is now dying, leaving neither a book nor a child to perpetuate his works and defend his memory. He will certainly be forgotten. His memory will perish with him. We should have been forced to this conclusion. But the event has completely baffled our prescience, and confounded our calculations, for there are to-day more than two hundred millions of men in the world to whom the name of the Crucified is a familiar name. Even in this temple there are now a thousand men gathered to hear me speak of Jesus Christ. The only explanation

of this is that "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." The fact that Christ still lives explains the establishment of Christianity in the world, and sheds a bright light upon the wonderful truth that the Savior has, since his resurrection till now, lived in the hearts of his followers.

And here I would call your attention to the situation of the world at the time Jesus took leave of his eleven apostles at the foot of the Mount of Olives. As he bade them farewell he said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But the disciples of Christ were a few obscure, unknown men, and this was the first and greatest difficulty that the Gospel had to encounter. There seemed to be a necessity for an immediate and great victory that should be a pledge of all the rest. And this victory was won by Jesus on the day of Pentecost. The defection of Judas had reduced the number of the disciples to eleven.

The most energetic of them all had, at the sound of a servant's voice, denied his Master, and all, at the time of his arrest, had fled. Not one had dared to defend him before the Sanhedrim or before Pilate. During the two or three years they had spent with their Master, they had constantly misunderstood him. In common with all the Jewish nation, they had hoped that Christ would come in all the pomp and glory of a king. They, too, had expected a temporal deliverer, and after the meek and lowly Savior came, they often doubted and murmured with the crowd, and Jesus was often compelled to tell them that they were "without understanding," and slow to believe. And yet these men, who had no courage, or power, or education, these disciples, who had almost made shipwreck of their faith, showed themselves boldly in Jerusalem among the very men who had, only a little while before, killed the Savior, and stood up boldly before those who had cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and said, "Ye men of

Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. This Jesus hath God raised up. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." The cause of this radical, complete change from darkness to light, and from cowardice to the most heroic courage was a living Christ. "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more," was their great inspiration. He was living in the hearts of those who, not having defended him when he was on earth, had resolved to die for him, if necessary, now that he was gone. And this power of a new life they communicated to that crowd to which Jesus had in vain held out his pleading hands. The primitive Church of Jerusalem won its friends from among the proud Pharisees, and the unbelieving Sadducees, and the ignorant populace. The millions

of men who became of one heart and one soul, and who knew no other rivalry than that of faith and holiness, had been the bitterest enemies of Christ. Every day the little, faithful flock was strengthened by the addition of new lost sheep from the house of Israel. Jesus Christ had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And Isaiah was inspired to say, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." The light of the divine life of Him who, "being raised from the dead, dieth no more," was destined to shine far beyond the walls of Jerusalem, and far beyond the frontiers of Judea. The friends of Christ were to "come from the east, and from the west," and the Holy One of Israel was to be the Lord of all the earth! The world was to be won to the Gospel! And what an enterprise was this! How does it confound all human thought!

If time would permit, I could give you a picture of the Greco-Roman world at the time the twelve Galilean fishermen, who formed the origin of that army of Jesus Christ that was destined to make the moral conquests of the world, began their work. The state of society when the apostles first entered the field proves the regenerating, expansive power of the Gospel. Let us glance at the testimony of two contemporaries of that day, Seneca and St. Paul. Seneca says:

“Vice and crime abound every-where, so that they are beyond the control of law. The tendency to evil is daily growing stronger and stronger, and there is daily less shame in committing it. Despising all things that are good and honest, men are continually being hurried by their passions into all excesses. Vice no longer hides its head, but shows itself every-where, in open day.”

And St. Paul, the contemporary of Seneca, says:

“Because that [men] when they knew God,

glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools : and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves : who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

We see in this testimony the mental and moral darkness it was to be the work of the Gospel to dissipate, and the field of labor intrusted to the apostles. They were to attack evil at its root, and combat that degrading religion which had deified vice, and honored impurity, and given the reins to all wicked passions, and even sanctioned them by the corrupt example of impure divinities. This religion



although despised by a few philosophers, had mingled with every thing. It flattered the national pride; it was sung by poets and prescribed by emperors. It was also closely united with politics, and it had at its disposition all the resources of art, all the magnificence of the public worship, and presented itself to the people in all the attractions of great national memories; but if it had done nothing more than to offer to proud Rome the statue of Victory, placed at the capitol, it would have done enough to win the hearts of the people. It was necessary to combat the depravity, the sins, that disgraced all classes in society, the patricians as well as the plebeians, the Cæsars as well as the slaves. It was necessary to oppose the bloodthirsty spirit of the day, the pitiless, capricious cruelty that took savage delight in compelling not only man to fight with man, but the young girl to fight with lions and tigers. The people, the emperors, the priests, and the philosophers rose up in arms against Christianity—the people,

because it dethroned their favorite idols and commanded chastity; the emperors, because it preached the doctrine of human brotherhood; the priests, because it drove them into the shade, and destroyed their influence and their fortune; the philosophers, because it clashed with their pride by opposing to their pretended wisdom the wisdom of a poor Jew, who had been crucified as a slave.

We see the great work of the twelve Galilean fishermen, the work to which they consecrated their lives, and for which they poured out their blood. It was not enough for them that they had "filled Jerusalem with the name of Jesus," and spread throughout that city the good news of redemption, of a redemption that had been wrought out by the sufferings and death of a man who had been crucified as a common malefactor. They proclaimed the glad tidings on the confines of Judea, in Samaria, in Asia Minor, among the Scythians, among the Persians, in Greece, in Italy, indeed, every-where in the known world. Nothing

shook their courage or zeal. Paul particularly, the heroic apostle of the Gentiles, took long and dangerous journeys over mountains and seas, fired with the most enthusiastic purpose to win Jews and Greeks to Christianity, and destroy, at last, synagogue and idol worship. Free or a captive in chains, on land or on sea, before the Areopagus, before Agrippa, Festus, Felix, or a few sailors, he declared himself the friend of that Jesus of whom he had once been an implacable persecutor. Every-where the new religion found partisans, and every new disciple became, in his turn, a preacher of righteousness. There were no longer any traitors among the crowd of worshipers. The glad tidings spread with the rapidity of light, and, like the light, it dissipated the darkness. The Gospel, in its vivifying power, wrought as great wonders as Jesus wrought during his ministry. It spread everywhere, overcoming all obstacles, and creating, as it were, a new world.

The history of the Church during the first

three centuries is a powerful commentary on those words: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more." He lived in the hearts of his disciples, animating their zeal, and inspiring their courage. Ten times did persecution attack the infant Church, but it only made martyrs whose blood became the seed of the Church. The fires of the stake were lighted, innumerable crosses were raised every-where to crucify the disciples of the Crucified, and even new tortures were invented. Believers in Christ were fought not only with iron weapons, but with weapons of scorn, and sarcasm, and calumny. Every effort was made to stir up the populace against them. But all these efforts were useless, and all this rage powerless. The religion of Jesus was implanted in the world. "That odious and execrable superstition," as Tacitus called it, had proved its infinite superiority to the wisdom of Socrates and Plato. Idolatry had been driven from the throne of the Cæsars, and a pure, spiritual worship had taken its place.

The temples of false gods had become temples of prayer.

A few years later, it is true, idolatry reappeared in the world, and regained much of its lost power. Julian the Apostate tried to revenge polytheism by correcting a few of its faults and covering it with the cloak of philosophy. He spent in a bad cause all the strength of his genius and obstinate will. He made paganism the religion of the court, and made himself known as a foe to Christianity. Influenced by the honors and riches he offered, a few noted Christians abandoned their faith, and all who remained faithful he overwhelmed with contempt and disgrace. He sought to weaken the Church by favoring all the sects. Nothing could equal his ardent antipathy to Jesus. But while he was flattering himself that he had wrested from Him the empire of the world, and that it would soon belong to Jupiter—while he was hoping that, at the sound of his voice, humanity would again return to the worship of the old altars—death

struck him down on a field of battle, and he died uttering terrible words of blasphemy. It is a common tradition that when he felt himself wounded he caught in the hollow of his hand some of the blood that issued from his side, and, flinging it in the air, exclaimed, "Take thy fill, Galilean; thou hast conquered me, but still do I renounce thee."

But the persevering efforts of this apostate did not stop the triumphant march of Christianity. After subduing the Greco-Roman world, Christianity found new adversaries. In the heart of Asia were innumerable wandering hordes of men who had been driven westward by war and famine, and they precipitated themselves upon the civilized world, ready to bury it in smoking ruins. They knew no pity nor mercy. Hurried on by a thirst for pillage and destruction, they crossed rivers and mountains, and drove back the Roman legions, and spread terror every-where. Every thing fell before this scourge of the Almighty, and barbarism seemed to be the fate of desolated Europe.

Nothing could resist this devastating torrent. Christianity seemed in danger of being destroyed, but Christ still lived, and no power on earth could lay him again in his grave. The Gospel subdued these barbarous races as it had subdued Rome and Athens. The conquerors accepted the religion of the conquered. They submitted to the divine power of Christ, and bowed their heads to receive Christian baptism. Out of the chaos of barbarism once more rose the Christian world, for "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more."

In one of his parables Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven was likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." In these few words the Savior traced the history of the Church. Even in her time of victory tares had grown up with the wheat, and the Church had begun to swerve from the spiritual principles and pure rules of holy living that Christ brought with him into the world. Angry discussions

soon turned the sanctuary of peace and love into the arena of strife and discord. In its days of persecution and trouble the Church was a holy, living Church, and stood firm in spite of the wrath of its enemies; but she afterward proved herself to be easily corrupted by prosperity. The conversion of Constantine has often been presented as the triumph of Christianity. Influenced, as Constantine was, by political motives, and his own selfish, worldly interests, rather than by any personal convictions, his conversion was a sign of the decay of the Church. The Church bowed down to the civil power. She stooped to the Cæsars, and bought their protection by cowardly compliance and concession. Christianity lost in spiritual life what it gained in temporal power. To embrace the Gospel was no longer to condemn one's self to scorn, and disgrace, and death, as in the earlier days of Christianity. It was rather a means of securing the approbation of emperors, and obtaining from them favors and dignities.



Adherence to the religion of the Crucified was at first individual and spontaneous, but at a later day whole populations, driven by fear or wild enthusiasm, entered the Church, taking with them their passions, and their prejudices, and their idols. The Church was no longer the conqueror but the conquered, for she had fallen from her primitive holiness. She had indeed become a living commentary on those words, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." She borrowed from the Jewish Pharisaism its sacerdotal spirit, and from paganism its superstitious practices, and even received many of the cruel customs and manners of those northern hordes that had invaded the civilized world. As a natural consequence, a great change was wrought in her as an ecclesiastical organization. She soon had a clerical hierarchy that was an imitation of the administrative Roman hierarchy, and that found its center and unity in the Bishop of Rome. There followed a long period of despotism,

and mental darkness, and gross superstitions, and rivalries, and civil and foreign wars that was designated as the Middle Ages. Let no one attempt to excuse the Church by accusing the spirit of the age of being the guilty cause of all the wreck and ruin. The cause was in the Church. The Church herself made the spirit of the age, and on her we cast the blame of arresting the progress of the Gospel. And more than this, she introduced sensualism into religion, and put gross formalism in the place of the inner life of holiness. She also gave legends and oral tradition the rightful place of history and the gospels; and, full of the spirit of the world, she bowed down before the civil power, that she might earn riches and honors. After all this she made even kings tremble with her despotic theocracy, and with that spiritual and temporal dominion that was extravagant in its pretensions and fatal in its consequences. Certainly the ruin that then threatened Christianity was a thousand times greater than that of which it

had been in danger from the heathen world. Satan had transformed himself into an angel of light. If humanity was ever in danger of making shipwreck of its faith, it was in these dark ages, when the people, deprived of religious instruction, and lulled to sleep with ridiculous legends, no longer knew even the name of the Gospel. Immorality and despotism were triumphant; impiety and superstition had their dwelling-place on the pontifical throne.

I can not in this holy place recount the vices and disorders of the court of Rome, when the triple tiara was worn by the Popes whose immoralities set at defiance modesty and purity, and was never abashed by any scandal. "Let these things not be once named among you," said an apostle. Leaving, then, the execrable pontificates of Benedict IX, and Sylvester III, and John XII, and Alexander VI, and Sixtus IV, and of all others like them, I will mention only three facts in the history of the three Popes who

are the pride of the Romish Church, and whom she regards as her heroes. I refer to Gregory VII, and Innocent III, and Leo X. The first was the founder of the universal theocracy; the second was remarkable for giving away scepters and crowns at his will; the third was the enlightened protector of the arts and sciences. From the three facts I am about to give with regard to these Popes, you can judge of the character of those whose names not even the ultramontanes themselves could mention without a blush.

In the 11th century, in the year 1077, in the month of January, there stood in the yard of the palace of Canosse a man in the attitude of a suppliant. His head was uncovered, his feet were bare, and he was shivering and trembling with the cold. He had crossed the Alps in the depth of Winter, and been obliged to lay aside not only the dignity of a king but of a man, and wait three days in the palace yard, that he might obtain audience of

the Pope, and beg the crown that had been torn from his head. This humble, degraded suppliant was the powerful Henry IV, and he who condemned him to the ignominy of thus waiting for his pardon and his crown was "the servant of the servants of God," Gregory VII. This was the obedience of papacy to the commands, "Fear God. Honor the king," "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

In the thirteenth century a besieging army was standing before the walls of Beziers. On the shoulder of every soldier had been embroidered a cross, in obedience to the order of the Pope, who, after having failed in his designs to exterminate the followers of Mohammed, had decided to try his strength on the heretical Christians, and had promised his adherents that the more blood they made flow the higher should be their place in heaven. The city, infected with the heresy of the Albigenses, was about to yield before the attacking army, but there were many

faithful sheep of the holy see within its walls, and the army appealed to the legate of Innocent III to know what course should be taken to spare them. "Kill them all!" answered the abbot of Citeaux. "The Lord knows them that are his." Nearly sixty thousand persons were at once massacred. Persons of both sexes, of every age, heretical or orthodox, rebellious or submissive, all perished in this horrible butchery, that none of the Albigenes might be allowed to escape. And this was the obedience of the pretended successors of St. Peter to the Savior's command, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

In the sixteenth century, in the year 1516, there stood, one day, in the public square of Wittemberg, a man with the ensigns of the Papacy and the arms of Leo X suspended over his head. At the sound of the clarion and the drum priests, monks, nobles, bourgeois, and peasants had flocked about him.

And there, in the midst of a great throng, he stood, with the pontifical brief in one hand, and the tariff of his merchandise in the other. And what had he to sell? Heaven, the pardon of sins, and the right to commit all sins with impunity. Hear him: "A parricide for twenty sols bournois, the privilege of committing sacrilege for twenty-eight sols. The moment the money touches the bottom of the chest the soul will be released from purgatory, and will fly up to heaven. The Lord our God no more deals with men as God. He has given all power to the Pope." And these were the lessons in Christian morality that the Pope taught the people. These were his teachings with regard to the pardon offered to the world through the mercy of the Redeemer.

The sad facts I have given may seem a denial of the truth of these blessed words: "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more;" and you, my hearers, may be almost ready to say that the risen Christ must again have descended into his grave. But God never

left himself without testimony, nor Jesus without witnesses of his glory and power. The light had not gone out. It was only under a bushel, and, hidden as it was, a few feeble rays could be discerned—in the midst of the thick darkness a little light could be seen here and there. If Rome, with her Pope, and cardinals, and bishops, was plunged in the deepest night, Jesus still had a few followers whose hearts were his abode. They were to be found among the Albigenses, so cruelly massacred; among the Vaudois, who, hidden away in the mountains, defied the secular power and the anathemas of the Pope; and among the blessed precursors of the Reformation, among such men as Wickliff, and John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and Claude of Turin, whom Rome, thirsting for the blood of martyrs, condemned to death.

The greatness of the evil called for a remedy, and the terrible fall of humanity presaged its rising. The Master was only “asleep in the hinder part of the ship.” He had not



abandoned it. The conscience of a poor monk who had hungered and thirsted after righteousness protested against the errors and vices of the Church. The world welcomed him, and listened in transports of delight to his eloquence. Christ and his Word had been forgotten, but the Gospel, and with it the truth, and peace of conscience, and the hope of heaven seemed given back to man. Listen to the awakened monk: "Away with this odious traffic in indulgences. Jesus has said, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' Away with this doctrine of purgatory, that usurious bank of a simoniacal clergy, for Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' Away with the Popes, and with the monstrous dominion they exercise over the body and soul. Jesus said, 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' Away with superstition, and falsehood, and fraud, for Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.'"

"At the sound of Luther's voice," said a contemporary writer, "it seemed as if Christ had risen from the dead." In vain did princes, and priests, and Popes, and emperors attempt to oppose the Reformation. In vain did they attack it with the same arms that were used against the primitive Christians. It spread with the rapidity of lightning. It found its way into cottages and palaces, into convents, and into cities and villages every-where. It took from the Pontifical power a great part of Germany and Switzerland, of England and Scotland, of Sweden, and Denmark, and Holland, and, after a hard struggle of two centuries in France, it left precious leaven that will one day leaven the whole lump.

"If it was less successful in Italy and Spain," says Machiavel, "it was because the nearer the people were to the center of Christendom—that is to say, the Papacy—the fewer Christians there were to be reformed, and the persecutors were much more numerous than the persecuted." Wherever the Reformation

spread it broke the chains of families and nations, and spread the principles of order, and liberty, and progress, and restored a pure morality and a pure Gospel to all men. The Romish Church herself participated, although without her knowledge, in the spiritual work she tried to arrest. Roman Catholicism of to-day is not what it was in the sixteenth century. It is still obstinate and intolerant, but it has not the same corrupt and bloodthirsty clergy. And we may hope that the great principles of the Reformation will yet work the purification and perfect renewal of the Romish Church.

The past—a sure pledge of the future—affirms the blessed truth that “Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.” All things are Christ’s, and to him alone belongs the unknown future that awaits humanity. So we will look calmly and quietly through this transition period in which we live into the future.

There are three principles with which we

are familiar: Rationalism, which is anarchy of thought; Roman Catholicism, which is despotism of thought; and evangelical Christianity, which is liberty of thought. Rationalism says, Believe in thyself; Roman Catholicism says, Believe in the Pope; but Christianity says, Believe in the Gospel.

Weary of groping in the dark, and finding it impossible to renounce our reason, let us all accept Jesus Christ and his Word. Neither the sons of Voltaire nor the sons of the crusaders can win the victory. That belongs to the children of the Reformation. Humanity, conquered, at last, by the patient, divine love of God, will cast itself into the arms of the Savior, and, receiving its life from him, will say with the apostle, "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more."

THE END.





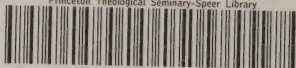








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